THE ICE-MAIDEN

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH BY MRS. BUSHBY

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TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS OF WALES

THE

ENGLISH VERSION OF 'HJOMFRUEN'

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

MOST DEVOTED HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

COPENHAGEN: *October* 1863.

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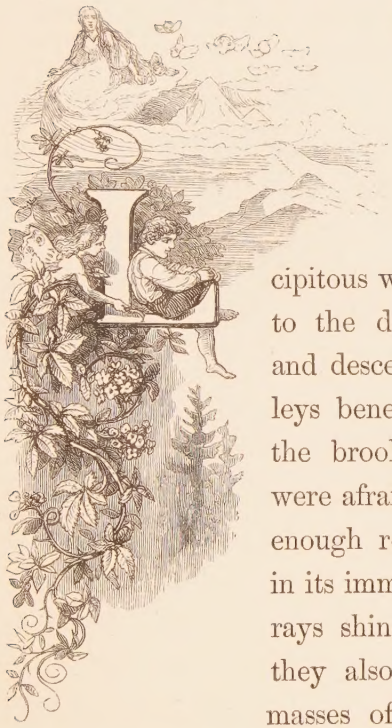
THE ICE-MAIDEN.

LITTLE RUDY.



LET us pay a visit to Switzerland. Let us look around us in that magnificent mountainous country, where the woods creep up the sides of the precipitous walls of rock; let us ascend to the dazzling snow-fields above, and descend again to the green valleys beneath, where the rivers and the brooks foam along as if they were afraid that they should not fast enough reach the ocean and be lost in its immensity. The sun's burning rays shine on the deep dales, and they also shine upon the heavy masses of snow above, so that the ice-blocks which have been accumulating for years melt

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and become rolling avalanches, piled-up glaciers. Two such lie in the broad mountain clefts under Schreckhorn and Wetterhorn, near the little mountain town of Grindelwald. They are wonderful to behold, and therefore in summer-time many strangers come here from every foreign land. They come over the lofty snow-covered hills; they come through the deep valleys, and from thence for hours and hours they must mount; and always, as they ascend, the valleys seem to become deeper and deeper, until they appear as if viewed from a balloon high up in the air. The clouds often hang like thick heavy curtains of smoke around the lofty mountain peaks, while down in the valley, where the many brown wooden houses lie scattered about, a bright ray of the sun may be shining, and bringing into strong relief some brilliant patch of green, making it look as if it were transparent. The waters foam and roar as they rush along below—they murmur and tinkle above. They look, up there, like silver ribands streaming down over the rocks.

On both sides of the ascending road lie wooden houses. Each house has its little potato garden, and

this is a necessity; for within doors yonder are many mouths—the houses are crammed with children—and children often waste their food. From all the cottages they sally forth in swarms, and throng round travellers, whether these are on foot or in carriages. The whole troop of children are little merchants—they offer for sale charming toy wooden houses, models of the dwellings one sees here among the mountains. Whether it be fair weather or foul, the crowds of children issue forth with their wares.

Some twenty years ago occasionally stood here, but always at a short distance from the other children, a little boy who was also ready to engage in trade. He stood with an earnest, grave expression of countenance, and holding his deal box fast with both his hands, as if he were afraid of losing it. The very earnestness of his face, and his being such a little fellow, caused him to be remarked and called forward, so that he often sold the most—he did not himself know why. Higher up among the hills lived his maternal grandfather, who cut out the neat pretty houses, and in a room up yonder was an old press full of all sorts of things—

nut-crackers, knives, forks, boxes with prettily carved leaf-work, and springing chamois: there was everything to please a child's eye. But the little Rudy, as he was called, looked with greater interest and longing at the

The Young Goatherd.

old fire-arms and other weapons which were hung up under the beams of the roof. 'He should have them some day,' said his grandfather, 'when he was big enough and strong enough to make use of them.' Young as the

boy was, he was set to take care of the goats; and he who had to clamber after them was obliged to keep a good look-out and to be a good climber. And Rudy *was* an excellent climber; he even went higher than the goats, for he was fond of seeking for birds' nests up among the tops of the trees. Bold and adventurous he was, but no one ever saw him smile, except when he stood near the roaring cataract or heard the thunder of a rolling avalanche. He never played with the other children—he never went near them, except when his grandfather sent him down to sell the things he made. And Rudy did not care much for that; he preferred scrambling about among the mountains, or sitting at home with his grandfather, and hearing him tell stories of olden days, and of the people near by at Meyringen, from whence he came. 'This tribe had not been settled there from the earliest ages of the world,' he said; 'they were wanderers from afar; they had come from the distant North, where their race still dwelt, and were called "Swedes."' This was a great deal for Rudy to learn, but he learned more from other sources, and these were the animals domiciled in the house. One was a

large dog, Ajola, a legacy from Rudy's father—the other a tom-cat. Rudy had much for which to thank the latter—he had taught him to climb.

'Come out upon the roof with me!' the cat had said, distinctly and intelligibly; for when one is a young child, and can scarcely speak, fowls and ducks, cats and dogs, are almost as easily understood as the language that fathers and mothers use. One must be very little indeed then, however; it is the time when grandpapa's stick neighs, and becomes a horse with head, legs, and tail.

Some children retain these infantine thoughts longer than others; and of these it is said that they are very backward, exceedingly stupid children—people say so much!

'Come out upon the roof with me, little Rudy!' was one of the first things the cat said, and Rudy understood him.

'It is all nonsense to fancy one must fall down; you won't fall unless you are afraid. Come! set one of your paws here, the other there, and take care of yourself with the rest of your paws! Keep a sharp look-out, and

be active in your limbs! If there be a hole, spring over it, and keep a firm footing as I do.'

And so also did little Rudy; often and often he sat on the shelving roof of the house with the cat, often too on the tops of the trees; but he sat also higher up among the towering rocks, which the cat did not frequent.

'Higher! higher!' said the trees and the bushes. 'Do you not see how we climb up—to what height we go, and how fast we hold on, even among the narrowest points of rock?'

And Rudy gained the top of the hill earlier than the sun had gained it; and there he took his morning draught, the fresh invigorating mountain air—that drink which only OUR LORD can prepare, and which mankind pronounces to be the early fragrance from the mountain herbs and the wild thyme and mint in the valley. All that is heavy the overhanging clouds absorb within themselves, and the winds carry them over the pine woods, while the spirit of fragrance becomes air—light and fresh; and this was Rudy's morning draught.

The sunbeams—those daughters of the sun, who bring blessings with them—kissed his cheeks; and dizziness

stood near on the watch, but dared not approach him; and the swallows from his grandfather's house beneath (there were not less than seven nests) flew up to him and the goats, singing, 'We and you, and you and we!' They brought him greetings from his home, even from the two hens, the only birds in the establishment, though Rudy was not intimate with them.

Young as he was, he had travelled, and travelled a good deal for such a little fellow. He was born in the Canton of Valais, and brought from thence over the hills. He had visited on foot Staubbach, that seems like a silver veil to flutter before the snow-clad, glittering white mountain Jungfrau. And he had been at the great glaciers near Grindelwald, but that was connected with a sad event; his mother had found her death there, and there, his grandfather used to say, 'little Rudy had got all his childish merriment knocked out of him.' Before the child was a year old, 'he laughed more than he cried,' his mother had written; but from the time that he fell into the crevasse in the ice, his disposition had entirely changed. The grandfather did not say much about this in general, but the whole hill knew the fact.

Rudy's father had been a postilion, and the large dog who now shared Rudy's home had always accompanied him in his journeys over the Simplon down to the Lake of Geneva. Rudy's kindred on his father's side lived in the valley of the Rhone, in the Canton Valais; his uncle was a celebrated chamois-hunter, and a well-known Alpine guide. Rudy was not more than a year old when he lost his father; and his mother was anxious to return with her child to her own family in the Bernese Oberland. Her father dwelt at the distance of a few hours' journey from Grindelwald; he was a carver in wood, and he made so much by this that he was very well off.

Carrying her infant in her arms, she set out homewards in the month of June, in company with two chamois-hunters, over the Gemmi to reach Grindelwald. They had accomplished the greater portion of the journey, had crossed the highest ridges to the snow-fields, and could already see her native valley with all its well-known scattered brown cottages; they had now only the labour of going over the upper part of one great glacier. The snow had recently fallen, and concealed a crevasse—not one so deep as to reach to the abyss below where the

water foamed along, but deeper far than the height of any human being. The young woman who was carrying her infant slipped, sank in, and suddenly disappeared; not a shriek, not a groan was heard—nothing but the crying of a little child. Upwards of an hour elapsed before her two companions were able to obtain from the nearest house ropes and poles to assist them in extricating her; and it was with much difficulty and labour that they brought up from the crevasse two dead bodies, as they thought. Every means of restoring animation was employed, and they were successful in recalling the child to life, but not the mother; and so the old grandfather received into his house, not a daughter, but a daughter's son—the little one 'who laughed more than he cried.' But a change seemed to have come over him since he had been in the glacier-spalten—in the cold underground ice-world, where the souls of the condemned are imprisoned until Doom's day, as the Swiss peasants assert.

Not unlike a rushing stream, frozen and pressed into blocks of green crystal, lies the glacier, one great mass of ice balanced upon another; in the depths beneath

tears along the accumulating stream of melted ice and snow; deep hollows, immense crevasses, yawn within it. A wondrous palace of crystal it is, and in it dwells the Ice-maiden—the queen of the glaciers. She, the slayer, the crusher, is half the mighty ruler of the rivers, half a child of the air: therefore she is able to soar to the highest haunts of the chamois, to the loftiest peaks of the snow-covered hills, where the boldest mountaineer has to cut footsteps for himself in the ice; she sails on the slightest sprig of the pine-tree over the raging torrents below, and bounds lightly from one mass of ice to another, with her long snow-white hair fluttering about her, and her bluish-green robe shining like the water in the deep Swiss lakes.

'To crush—to hold fast—such power is mine!' she cries; 'yet a beautiful boy was snatched from me—a boy whom I had kissed, but not kissed to death. He is again among mankind; he tends the goats upon the mountain heights; he is always climbing higher and higher still, away, away from other human beings, but not from me! He is mine—I wait for him!'

And she commanded Vertigo to undertake the mission.

It was in summer-time; the Ice-maiden was melting in the green valley where the wild mint grew, and Vertigo mounted and dived. Vertigo has several sisters, quite a flock of them, and the Ice-maiden selected the strongest among the many who exercise their power within doors and without—those who sit on the banisters of steep staircases and the outer rails of lofty towers, who bound like squirrels along the mountain ridges, and, springing thence, tread the air as the swimmer treads the water, and lure their victims onwards, down to the abyss beneath.

Vertigo and the Ice-maiden both grasp after mankind, as the polypus grasps after all that comes within its reach. Vertigo was to seize Rudy.

'Seize him, indeed!' cried Vertigo; 'I cannot do it! That good-for-nothing cat has taught him its art. Yon child of the human race possesses a power within himself which keeps me at a distance. I cannot reach the little urchin when he hangs from the branches out over the depths below, or I would willingly loosen his hold, and send him whirling down through the air. But I cannot.'

'We must seize him, though!' said the Ice-maiden, 'either you or I! I will—I will!'

'No—no!' broke upon the air, like a mountain echo of the church bells' peal; but it was a whisper, it was a song, it was the liquid tones of a chorus from other spirits of Nature—mild, soft, and loving, the daughters of the rays of the sun. They station themselves every evening in a circle upon the mountain peaks, and spread out their rose-tinted wings, which, as the sun sinks, become redder and redder, until the lofty Alps seem all in a blaze. Men call this the Alpine glow. When the sun has sunk, they retire within the white snow on the crests of the hills, and sleep there until sunrise, when they come forth again. Much do they love flowers, butterflies, and mankind; and among the latter they had taken a great fancy for little Rudy.

'You shall not imprison him—you shall not get him!' they sang.

'Greater and stronger have I seized and imprisoned,' said the Ice-maiden.

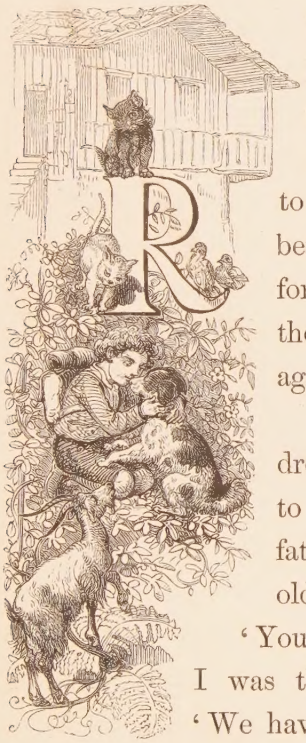
Then sang the daughters of the sun of the wanderer whose hat the whirlwind tore from his head, and carried

away in its stormy flight. The wind could take his cap, but not the man himself—no, it could make him tremble with its violence, but it could not sweep him away. 'The human race is stronger and more ethereal even than we are; they alone may mount higher than even the sun, our parent. They know the magic words that can rule the wind and the waves so that they are compelled to obey and to serve them. You loosen the heavy oppressive weight, and they soar upwards.'

Thus sang the sweet tones of the bell-like chorus.

And every morning the sun's rays shone through the one little window in the grandfather's house upon the quiet child. The daughters of the rays of the sun kissed him—they wished to thaw, to obliterate the ice-kiss that the queenly maiden of the glaciers had given him when, in his dead mother's lap, he lay in the deep crevasse of ice from which almost as by a miracle he had been rescued.

THE JOURNEY TO THE NEW HOME.



RUDY was now eight years of age. His father's brother, who lived in the valley of the Rhone, on the other side of the mountain, wished to have the boy, as he could be better educated and taught to do for himself there; so also thought the grandfather, and he therefore agreed to part with him.

The time for Rudy's departure drew nigh. There were many more to take leave of than only his grandfather. First there was Ajola, the old dog.

'Your father was the postilion, and I was the postilion's dog,' said Ajola. 'We have often journeyed up and down, and I know both dogs and men on both sides of the

mountains. It has not been my habit to speak much, but now that we shall have so short a time for conversation, I will say a little more than usual, and will relate to you something upon which I have ruminated a great deal. I cannot understand it, nor can you; but that is of no consequence. But I have gathered this from it—that the good things of this world are not dealt out equally either to dogs or to mankind; all are not born to lie in laps or to drink milk. I have never been accustomed to such indulgences. But I have seen a whelp of a little dog travelling in the inside of a post-chaise, occupying a man's or a woman's seat, and the lady to whom he belonged, or whom he governed, carried a bottle of milk, from which she helped him; she also offered him sponge-cakes, but he would not condescend to eat them; he only sniffed at them, so she ate them herself. I was running in the sun by the side of the carriage, as hungry as a dog could be, but *I* had only to chew the cud of bitter reflection. Things were not so justly meted out as they might have been—but when are they? May you come to drive in carriages, and lie in fortune's lap; but you can't bring all this

about yourself. *I* never could either by barking or growling.'

This was Ajola's discourse; and Rudy threw his arms round his neck and kissed him on his wet mouth; and then he caught up the cat in his arms, but the animal was angry at this, and exclaimed, 'You are getting too strong for me, but I will not use my claws against you. Scramble away over the mountains—I have taught you how to do so; never think of falling, but hold fast, have no fear, and you will be safe enough.'

And the cat sprang down and ran off, for he did not wish Rudy to see how sorry he was.

The hens hopped upon the floor; one of them had lost her tail, for a traveller, who chose to play the sportsman, had shot off her tail, mistaking the poor fowl for a bird of prey.

'Rudy is going over the hills,' murmured one of the hens.

'He is in a hurry,' said the other, 'and I don't like leave-takings;' and they both hopped out.

The goats also bleated their farewells, and very sorry they were.

Just at that time there were two active guides about to cross the mountains; they proposed descending the other side of the Gemmi, and Rudy was to accompany them on foot. It was a long and laborious journey for such a little fellow, but he had a good deal of strength, and had courage that was indomitable.

The swallows flew a little way with him, and sang to him, 'We and you, and you and we!'

The travellers' path led across the rushing Lütschine, which in numerous small streams falls from the dark clefts of the Grindelwald glaciers. The trunks of fallen trees and fragments of rock serve here as bridges. They had soon passed the thicket of alders, and commenced to ascend the mountain, close to where the glaciers had loosened themselves from the side of the hill; and they went upon the glacier over the blocks of ice, and round them.

Rudy crept here, and walked there; his eyes sparkling with joy, as he firmly placed his iron-tipped mountain shoe wherever he could find footing for it. The small patches of black earth, which the mountain torrents had cast upon the glacier, imparted to it a burned appearance,

but still the bluish-green, glass-like ice shone out visibly. They had to go round the little pools which were dammed up, as it were, amidst detached masses of ice; and in this circuitous route they approached an immense stone, which lay rocking on the edge of a crevasse in the ice. The stone lost its equipoise, toppled over, and rolled down; and the echo of its thundering fall resounded faintly from the glacier's deep abyss, far—far beneath.

Upwards, always upwards, they journeyed on; the glacier itself stretched upwards, like a continued stream of masses of ice piled up in wild confusion, amidst bare and rugged rocks. Rudy remembered for a moment what had been told him—that he, with his mother, had lain buried in one of these cold mysterious fissures; but he soon threw off such gloomy thoughts, and only looked upon the tale as one among the many fables he had heard. Once or twice, when the men with whom he was travelling thought that it was rather difficult for so little a boy to mount up, they held out their hands to help him; but he never needed any assistance, and he stood upon the glacier as securely as if he had been a chamois itself.

Now they came upon rocky ground, sometimes amidst

mossy stones, sometimes amidst low pine-trees, and again out upon the green pastures—always changing, always new. Around them towered lofty snow-clad mountains, those of which every child in the neighbourhood knows the names—Jungfrau, the Monk, and Eiger.

Rudy had never before been so far from his home—never before beheld the wide-spreading ocean of snow that lay with its immovable billows of ice, from which the wind occasionally swept little clouds of powdery snow, as it sweeps the scum from the waves of the sea. Glacier stretched close to glacier—one might have said they were hand in hand; and each is a crystal palace belonging to the Ice-maiden, whose pleasure and occupation it is to seize and imprison her victims.

The sun was shining warmly, and the snow dazzled the eyes as if it had been strewn with flashing pale-blue diamond sparks. Innumerable insects, especially butterflies and bees, lay dead in masses on the snow; they had winged their way too high, or else the wind had carried them upwards to the regions, for them, of cold and death. Around Wetterhorn hung what might be likened to a large tuft of very fine dark wool, a threatening cloud; it

sank, bulging out with what it had concealed in itself—a föhn,* fearfully violent in its might when it should break loose.

The whole of this journey—the night quarters above—the wild track—the mountain clefts where the water, during an incalculably long period of time, had penetrated through the blocks of stone—made an indelible impression upon little Rudy's mind.

A forsaken stone building, beyond the sea of snow, gave the travellers shelter for the night. Here they found some charcoal and branches of pine-trees. A fire was soon kindled, couches of some kind were arranged as well as they could be, and the men placed themselves near the blazing fire, took out their tobacco, and began to drink the warm spiced beverage they had prepared for themselves, nor did they forget to give some to Rudy.

The conversation fell upon the mysterious beings who haunt the Alpine land: upon the strange gigantic snakes in the deep lakes—the night-folks—the spectre host, that carry sleepers off through the air to the wonderful, almost

* Föhn, a humid south wind on the Swiss mountains and lakes, the forerunner of a storm.—TRANSLATOR.

floating town of Venice—the wild herdsman, who drives his black sheep over the green pastures; if these had not been seen, the sound of their bells had undoubtedly been heard, and the frightful noise made by the phantom herds.

Rudy and the Gossips.

Rudy listened with intense curiosity to these superstitious tales, but without any fear, for *that* he did not know; and while he listened, he fancied that he heard the uproar of the wild spectral herd. Yes! It became

more and more distinct; the men heard it too. They were awed into silence; and as they hearkened to the unearthly noise, they whispered to Rudy that he must not sleep.

It was a föhn that had burst forth—that violent tempestuous wind which issues downwards from the mountains into the valley beneath, and in its fury snaps large trees as if they were but reeds, and carries the wooden houses from one bank of a river to the other as we would move men on a chess-board.

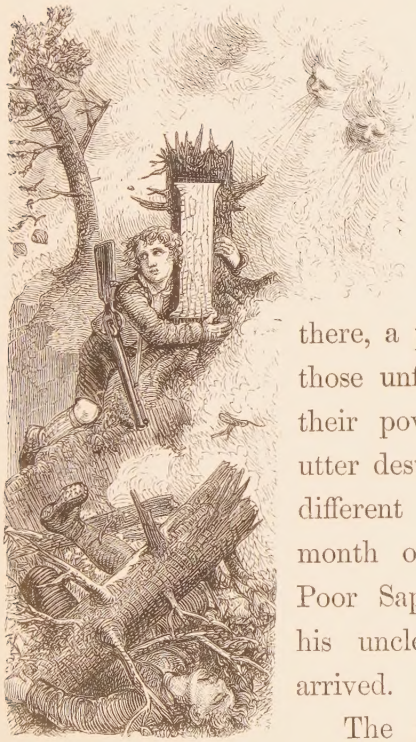
After an hour had elapsed, Rudy was told that it was all over, and he might now go to sleep safely; and, weary with his long walk, he did sleep, as if in duty bound to do so.

At a very early hour in the morning, the party set off again. The sun that day lighted up for Rudy new mountains, new glaciers, and new snow-fields. They had entered the Canton Valais, and were upon the other side of the ridge of hills seen from Grindelwald, yet still far from his new home.

Other mountain clefts, other pastures, other woods, and other hilly paths unfolded themselves; other houses,

and other people too, Rudy saw. But what kind of human beings were these? The outcasts of fate they were, with frightful, disgusting, yellowish faces, and necks of which the hideous flesh hung down like bags. They were the cretins—poor diseased wretches, dragging themselves along, and looking with stupid lustreless eyes upon the strangers who crossed their path—the women even more disgusting than the men. Were such the persons who surrounded his new home?

THE UNCLE.



N his uncle's house, when Rudy arrived there, he saw, and he thanked God for it, people such as he had been accustomed to see. There was only one cretin there, a poor idiotic lad: one of those unfortunate beings who, in their poverty—in fact, in their utter destitution—go by turns to different families, and remain a month or two in each house. Poor Saperli happened to be in his uncle's house when Rudy arrived.

The uncle was a bold and experienced hunter, and was also a cooper by trade;

his wife a lively little woman, with a face something like that of a bird, eyes like those of an eagle, and a long skinny throat.

Everything was new to Rudy—the dress, customs, employments—even the language itself; but his childish ear would soon learn to understand that. The contrast between his home at his grandfather's and his uncle's abode was very favourable to the latter. The house was larger; the walls were adorned by horns of the chamois and brightly-polished guns; a painting of the Virgin Mary hung over the door, and fresh Alpine roses, and a lamp that was kept always burning, were placed before it.

His uncle, as has been told, was one of the most renowned chamois-hunters of the district, and was also one of the best and most experienced of the guides.

Rudy became the pet of the house; but there was another pet as well—a blind, lazy old hound, who could no longer be of any use; but he *had been* useful, and the worth of the animal in his earlier days was remembered, and he therefore now lived as one of the family, and had every comfort. Rudy patted the dog, but the animal did not like strangers, and as yet Rudy

was a stranger; but he soon won every heart, and became as one of themselves.

'Things don't go so badly in Canton Valais,' said his uncle. 'We have plenty of chamois; they do not die off so fast as the wild he-goats; matters are much better now-a-days than in the old times, although they *are* so bepraised. A hole is burst in the bag, and we have a current of air now in our confined valley. Something better always starts up when antiquated things are done away with.'

The uncle became quite chatty, and discoursed to the boy of the events of his own boyhood and those of his father. Valais was then, as he called it, only a receptacle for sick people—miserable cretins; 'but the French soldiers came, and they made capital doctors; they soon killed the disease, and the patients with it. They know how to strike—ay, how to strike in many ways—and the girls could smite too!' and thereupon the uncle nodded to his wife, who was of French descent, and laughed. 'The French could split solid stones if they chose. It was they who cut out of the rocks the road over the Simplon—yes, cut such a road that I could say to a child

of three years of age, Go down to Italy! You have but to keep to the high road, and you find yourself there.' The good man then sang a French romance, and wound up by shouting 'hurra!' for Napoleon Bonaparte.

It was the first time that Rudy had ever heard of France, and he was interested in hearing of it, especially Lyons, that great city on the river Rhone, where his uncle had been.

The uncle prophesied that Rudy would become, in a few years, a smart chamois-hunter, as he had quite a talent for it. He taught the boy to hold, load, and fire a gun; he took him up with him, in the hunting season, among the hills, and made him drink of the warm chamois' blood, to ward off giddiness from the hunter; he taught him to know the time when, upon the different sides of the mountains, avalanches were about to fall, at mid-day or in the evening, whenever the sun's rays took effect; he taught him to notice the movements of the chamois, and learn their spring, so that he might alight on his feet and stand firmly; and told him that if on the fissures of the rock there was no footing, he must support himself by his elbows, and exert the muscles of

his thighs and the calves of his legs to hold on fast. Even the neck could be made of use, if necessary.

The chamois are cunning, and place outposts on the watch; but the hunter must be more cunning, and scent

The Chamois.

them out. Sometimes he might cheat them by hanging up his hat and coat on an Alpine staff, and the chamois would mistake the coat for the man. This trick the uncle played one day when he was out hunting with Rudy.

The mountain pass was narrow; indeed, there was scarcely a path at all, scarcely more than a slight cornice close to the yawning abyss. The snow that lay there was partially thawed, and the stones crumbled away whenever they were trod on. So the uncle laid himself down his full length, and crept forward. Every fragment of stone that broke off, fell, rolling and knocking from one side of the rocky wall to another, until it sank to rest in the dark depths below. About a hundred paces behind his uncle stood Rudy, upon the verge of the last point of solid rock, and as he stood, he saw careering through the air, and hovering just over his uncle, an immense lämmergeier, which, with the tremendous stroke of its wing, would speedily cast the creeping worm into the abyss beneath, there to prey upon his carcase.

The uncle had eyes for nothing but the chamois, which, with its young kid, had appeared on the other side of the crevasse. Rudy was watching the bird; well did he know what was its aim, and therefore he kept his hand on the gun to fire the moment it might be necessary. Just then the chamois made a bound upwards; Rudy's uncle fired, and the animal was hit by the deadly

bullet, but the kid escaped as cleverly as if it had had a long life's experience in danger and flight. The enormous bird, frightened by the loud report, wheeled off in another direction; and the uncle was freed from a danger of which he was quite unconscious until he was told of it by Rudy.

As in high good-humour they were wending their way homewards, and the uncle was humming an air he remembered from his childish days, they suddenly heard a peculiar noise, which seemed to come from no great distance. They looked round, on both sides—they looked upwards; and there, in the heights above, on the sloping verge of the mountain, the heavy covering of snow was lifted up, and it heaved as a sheet of linen stretched out heaves when the wind creeps under it. The lofty mass cracked as if it had been a marble slab—it broke, and, resolving itself into a foaming cataract, came rushing down with a rumbling noise like that of distant thunder. It was an avalanche that had fallen, not indeed over Rudy and his uncle, but near them—all too near!

'Hold fast, Rudy—hold fast with all your might!' cried his uncle.

And Rudy threw his arms round the trunk of a tree that was close by, while his uncle climbed above him and held fast to the branches of the tree. The avalanche rolled past at a little distance from them, but the gust of wind that swept like the tail of a hurricane after it, rattled around the trees and bushes, snapped them asunder as if they had been but dry rushes, and cast them down in all directions. Rudy was dashed to the ground, for the trunk of the tree to which he had clung was thus overthrown; the upper part was flung to a great distance. There, amidst the shattered branches, lay his poor uncle, with his skull fractured! His hand was still warm, but it would have been impossible to recognise his face. Rudy stood pale and trembling; it was the first shock in his young life—the first moment he had ever felt terror.

Late in the evening he reached his home with the fatal tidings—his home which was now to be the abode of sorrow. The bereaved wife stood like a statue—she did not utter a word—she did not shed a tear; and it was not until the corpse was brought in that her grief found its natural vent. The poor cretin stole away to his bed,

and nothing was seen of him during the whole of the next day; towards evening he came to Rudy.

'Will you write a letter for me?' he asked. 'Saperli cannot write—Saperli can only go down to the post-office with the letter.'

'A letter for you?' exclaimed Rudy; 'and to whom?'

'To our Lord Christ!'

'Whom do you mean?'

And the half-idiot, as the cretin was called, looked with a most touching expression at Rudy, clasped his hands, and said solemnly and reverentially—

'Jesus Christ! Saperli would send Him a letter to pray of Him that Saperli may lie dead, and not the good master of the house here.'

And Rudy took his hand and wrung it. 'That letter would not reach up yonder—that letter would not restore to us him we have lost.'

But Rudy found it very difficult to convince Saperli of the impossibility of his wishes.

'Now you must be the support of the house,' said his aunt to him; and Rudy became such.

BABETTE.

WHO is the best marksman in the Canton Valais? The chamois well knew—'Save yourselves from Rudy!' they might have said. And 'who is the handsomest marksman?' 'Oh! it is Rudy!' said the girls. But they did not add, 'Save yourselves from Rudy;' neither did the sober mothers say so, for he bowed as politely to them as to the young girls. He was so brave and so joyous, his cheeks so brown, his teeth so white, his dark eyes so sparkling. A handsome young man he was, and only twenty years of age. The most ice-chill water never seemed too cold

for him when he was swimming—in fact, he was like a fish in the water; he could climb better than anyone else; he could also cling fast, like a snail, to the wall of rock. There were good muscles and sinews in him; this was quite evident whenever he made a spring. He had learned first from the cat how to spring, and from the chamois afterwards. Rudy had the reputation of being the best guide on the mountain, and he could have made a great deal of money by this occupation. His uncle had also taught him the cooper's trade, but he had no inclination for that. He cared for nothing but chamois-hunting; in this he delighted, and *it* also brought in money. Rudy would be an excellent match, it was said, if he only did not look too high. He was such a good dancer that the girls who were his partners often dreamt of him, and more than one let her thoughts dwell on him even after she awoke.

'He kissed me in the dance!' said Annette, the schoolmaster's daughter, to her dearest friend; but she should not have said this even to her dearest friend. Such secrets are seldom kept—like sand in a bag that has holes, they ooze out. Therefore, however well behaved

Rudy might be, it was soon spread about that he kissed in the dance; and yet he had never kissed her whom he would have liked to kiss.

'Take care of him!' said an old hunter; 'he has kissed Annette. He has begun with A, and he will kiss through the whole alphabet.'

A kiss in the dance was all that the gossips could find to bring against Rudy; but he certainly had kissed Annette, and yet she was not the flower of his heart.

Below at Bex, amidst the great walnut-trees, close to a small rushing mountain stream, lived the rich miller. His dwelling-house was a large building of three stories high, with small turrets; its roof was composed of shavings of wood covered with tinned iron plates, which shone in sunshine and moonshine; on the highest turret was a vane, a glittering arrow passed through an apple, in allusion to Tell's celebrated arrow-shot. The mill was a conspicuous object, and permitted itself to be sketched or written about; but the miller's daughter did not permit herself to be described in writing or to be sketched—so at least Rudy would have said. And yet her image was engraved on his heart; both her eyes blazed in on it, so

that it was quite in flames. The fire had, like other fires, come on suddenly; and the strangest part of it was, that the miller's daughter, the charming Babette, was quite ignorant of it, for she and Rudy had never so much as spoken two words to each other.

The miller was rich, and, on account of his wealth, Babette was rather high to aspire to. 'But nothing is so high,' said Rudy to himself, 'that one may not aspire to it. One must climb perseveringly, and if one has confidence one does not fall.' He had received this teaching in his early home.

It so happened that Rudy had some business to transact at Bex. It was a long journey to that place, for there was then no railroad. From the glaciers of the Rhone, immediately at the foot of the Simplon, among many and often shifting mountain peaks, stretches the broad valley of the Canton Valais, with its mighty river, the Rhone, whose waters are often so swollen as to overflow its banks, inundating fields and roads, and destroying all. Between the towns of Sion and St. Maurice the valley takes a turn, bending like an elbow, and below St. Maurice becomes so narrow that there is only space

for the bed of the river and the confined carriage-road. An old tower, like the guardian of the Canton Valais, which ends here, stands on the side of the mountain, and commands a view over the stone bridge to the custom-house on the other side, where the Canton Vaud commences; and nearest of the not very distant towns lies Bex. In this part, at every step forward, are displayed increased fruitfulness and abundance; one enters, as it were, a grove of chestnut and walnut trees. Here and there peep forth cypresses and pomegranates. It is almost as warm there as in Italy.

Rudy reached Bex, got through his business, and looked about him; but not a soul (putting Babette out of the question) belonging to the mill did he see. This was not what he wanted.

Evening came on; the air was filled with the perfume of the wild thyme and the blossoming lime-trees; there lay what seemed like a shining sky-blue veil over the wooded green hills; a stillness reigned around—not the stillness of sleep, not the stillness of death—no, it was as if all nature was holding its breath, in order that its image might be photographed upon the blue

surface of the heavens above. Here and there amidst the trees stood poles, or posts, which conveyed the wires of the telegraph along the silent valley; close against one of these leaned an object, so motionless that one might have

Rudy's Journey to the Mill.

thought it was the decayed trunk of a tree, but it was Rudy, who was standing there as still as was all around him at that moment. He was not sleeping, neither was he dead; but, as through the wires of the telegraph there

are often transmitted the great events of the world, and matters of the utmost importance to individuals, without the wires, by the slightest tremor or the faintest tone, betraying them, so there passed through Rudy's mind anxious overwhelming thoughts, fraught with the happiness of his future life, and constituting, from this time forth, his one unchanging aim. His eyes were fixed on one point before him, and that was a light in the parlour of the miller's house, where Babette resided. Rudy stood so still that one might have thought he was on the watch to fire at a chamois; but he was himself at that moment like a chamois, which one minute could stand as if it were chiselled out of the rock, and suddenly, if a stone but rolled past, would make a spring and leave the hunter in the lurch. And thus did Rudy, for a thought rolled through his mind.

'Never despair!' said he; 'a visit to the mill, say good evening to the miller, and good day to Babette. One does not fall unless one fears to do so. If I am to be Babette's husband, she must see me some day or other.'

And Rudy laughed, and made up his mind to go to

the miller's; he knew what he wanted, and that was to marry Babette.

The stream, with its yellowish-white water, was dashing on; the willows and lime-trees hung over it. Rudy, as it stands in the old nursery rhyme,

> Found to the miller's house his way;
> But there was nobody at home,
> Except a pussy-cat at play!

The cat, which was standing on the steps, put up its back and mewed; but Rudy was no way inclined to listen to it. He knocked at the door; no one seemed to hear him, no one answered. The cat mewed again. Had Rudy been still a little boy, he might have understood the cat's language, and heard that it said 'No one is at home.' But now he had to go to the mill to make the necessary enquiries, and there he was told that the master had gone on a long journey to the town of Interlaken—'Inter Lacus, amidst the lakes,' as the schoolmaster, Annette's father, in his great learning, had explained the name.

Ah! so far away, then, were the miller and Babette?

There was a great shooting match to be held at Interlaken; it was to begin the next morning, and to last for eight days. The Swiss from all the German cantons were to assemble there.

Poor Rudy! it was not a fortunate time for him to have come to Bex. He had only to return again; and he did so, taking the road over St. Maurice and Sion to his own valley, his own hills. But he was not disheartened. When the sun rose next morning, he was in high spirits, but indeed they had never been depressed.

'Babette is at Interlaken, a journey of many days from this,' he said to himself. 'It is a long way off if one goes by the circuitous high-road, but not so far if one cuts across the mountains, and that way just suits a chamois-hunter. I have gone that way before; over yonder lies my early home, where, as a little boy, I lived with my grandfather. And there are shooting matches at Interlaken; I shall take my place as the first there, and there also shall I be with Babette, when I become acquainted with her.'

Carrying his light knapsack, with his Sunday finery in it, with his musket and game-bag, Rudy went up the

mountain, the shortest way, yet still tolerably long; but the shooting matches were only to commence that day, and were to continue for a week. During all that time, he had been assured, the miller and Babette would stay with their relatives at Interlaken. So over the Gemmi trudged Rudy; he proposed descending near Grindelwald.

In high health and spirits he set off, enjoying the fresh, pure, and invigorating mountain air. The valleys sank deeper, the horizon became more extensive; here a snow-crested summit, there another, and speedily the whole of the bright shining Alpine range, became visible. Rudy knew well every ice-clad peak. He kept his course opposite to Schreckhorn, which raised its white-powdered stone finger high towards the blue vault above.

At length he had crossed the loftier mountain ridge. The pasture lands sloped down towards the valley that was his former home. The air was pleasant, his thoughts were pleasant; hill and dale were blooming with flowers and verdure, and his heart was full of the glowing dreams of youth; he felt as if old age, as if death, were never to approach him; life, power, enjoyment, were before him. Free as a bird, light as a bird, was Rudy;

and the swallows flew past him, and sang as in the days of his childhood, 'We and you, and you and we!' All was motion and pleasure.

Beneath lay the green velvet meadows, dotted with brown wooden houses; the river Lütschine rushed foaming along. He saw the glacier with its borders like green glass edging the dirty snow, and he saw the deep chasms, while the sound of the church bells came upon his ear, as if they were ringing a welcome to his old home. His heart beat rapidly, and his mind became so full of old recollections that for a moment he almost forgot Babette.

He was again traversing the same road where, as a little boy, he had stood along with other children to sell their carved wooden toy houses. Yonder, above the pine-trees, still stood his grandfather's house, but strangers dwelt there now. The children came running after him, as formerly; they wished to sell their little wares. One of them offered him an Alpine rose; Rudy took it as a good omen, and thought of Babette. He had soon crossed the bridge where the two Lütschines unite, and reached the smiling country where the walnut and other embowering

trees afford grateful shade. He soon perceived waving flags, and beheld the white cross on the red ground—the standard of the Swiss as of the Danes—and before him lay Interlaken.

Rudy thought it was certainly a splendid town—a Swiss town in its holiday dress. It was not, like other market towns, a heap of heavy stone houses, stiff, foreign-looking, and aiming at grandeur; no! it looked as if the wooden houses from the hills above had taken a start into the green valley beneath, with its clear stream whose waters rushed swiftly as an arrow, and had ranged themselves into rows—somewhat uneven, it is true—to form the street. And that prettiest of all, the street which had been built since Rudy, as a little boy, had last been there—*that* seemed to be composed of all the nicest wooden houses his grandfather had cut out, and with which the cupboard at home had been filled. These seemed to have transplanted themselves there, and to have grown in size, as the old chestnut-trees had done.

Every house almost was an hotel, as it was called, with carved wooden work round the windows and balconies, with smart-looking roofs, and before each

house a flower garden, between it and the wide macadamised high-road. Near these houses, but only on one side of the road, stood some other houses: had they formed a double row, they would have concealed the fresh green meadow, where wandered the cows with bells that rang as among the high Alpine pastures. The valley was encircled by lofty hills, which, about the centre, seemed to retire a little to one side, so as to render visible that glittering snow-white Jungfrau, the most beautiful in form of all the mountains of Switzerland.

What a number of gaily-dressed gentlemen and ladies from foreign lands—what crowds of Swiss from the adjacent cantons! The candidates for the prizes carried the numbers of their shots in a garland round their hats. There was music of all kinds—singing, hand-organs and wind instruments, shouting and racket. The houses and bridges were adorned with verses and emblems. Flags and banners waved; the firing of gun after gun was heard, and that was the best music to Rudy's ears. Amidst all this excitement he almost forgot Babette, for whose sake only he had gone there.

Crowds were thronging to the target-shooting. Rudy

was soon among them, and he was always the luckiest—the best shot—for he always struck the bull's-eye.

'Who is that young stranger—that capital marksman?' was asked around. 'He speaks the French language as they speak it in the Canton Valais; he also expresses himself fluently in our German,' said several people.

'When a child he lived here in the valley, near Grindelwald,' replied some one.

The youth was full of life; his eyes sparkled, his aim was steady, his arm sure, and therefore his shots always told. Good fortune bestows courage, and Rudy had always courage. He had soon a whole circle of friends round him. Everyone noticed him; in short, he became the observed of all observers. Babette had almost vanished from his thoughts. Just then a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a rough voice accosted him in the French language with—

'You are from the Canton Valais?'

Rudy turned round, and beheld a red jolly countenance and a stout person. It was the rich miller from Bex; his broad bulk hid the slender lovely Babette, who, however, soon came forward with her dark bright

eyes. The rich miller was very proud that it was a huntsman from his own canton that had been declared the best shot, and was so much distinguished and so much praised. Rudy was truly the child of good fortune; what he had travelled so far to look for, but had since his arrival nearly forgotten, now sought him.

When at a distance from home one meets persons from thence, acquaintance is speedily made, and people speak as if they knew each other. Rudy held the first place at the shooting matches, as the miller held the first place at Bex on account of his money and his mill. So the two men shook hands, although they had never met before; Babette, too, held out her hand frankly to Rudy, and he pressed it warmly, and gazed with such admiration at her that she became scarlet.

The miller talked of the long journey they had made, and the numerous large towns they had seen, and how they had travelled both by steam and by post.

'I came the shorter way,' said Rudy; 'I went over the mountains. There is no road so high that one cannot venture to take it.'

'Ay, at the risk of breaking one's neck!' replied

the miller; 'and you look just like one who will some day or other break his neck—you are so daring!'

'One does not fall unless one has the fear of doing so,' said Rudy.

And the miller's relations at Interlaken, with whom he and Babette were staying, invited Rudy to visit them, since he came from the same canton as did their kindred. It was a pleasant invitation for Rudy. Luck was with him, as it always is with those who depend upon themselves, and remember that 'our Lord bestows nuts upon us, but He does not crack them for us!'

And Rudy sat, almost like one of the family, amongst the miller's relations, and a toast was drunk in honour of the best shot, to which Rudy returned thanks, after clinking glasses with Babette.

In the evening the whole party took a walk on the pretty avenue along the gay-looking hotels under the walnut-trees; and there was such a crowd, and so much pushing, that Rudy had to offer his arm to Babette. He told her how happy he was to have met people from the Canton Vaud, for Vaud and Valais were close neighbours. He spoke so cordially that Babette could not resist

slightly squeezing his hand. They seemed almost like old acquaintances, and she was very lively—that pretty little girl. Rudy was much amused at her remarks on what was absurd and over-fine in the dress of the foreign ladies, and the affectation of some of them; but she did not wish to ridicule them, for there might be some excellent people among them—yes, nice amiable people, Babette was sure of that, for she had a godmother who was a very superior English lady. Eighteen years before, when Babette was christened, that lady was at Bex; she had given Babette the valuable brooch she wore. Her godmother had written to her twice, and this year they were to have met her at Interlaken, whither she was coming with her daughters: they were old maids, going on for thirty, said Babette—she herself was only eighteen.

The tongue in her pretty little mouth was not still for a moment, and all that she said appeared to Rudy as matters of the greatest importance. And he told her what he had to tell—told how he had been to Bex, how well he knew the mill, and how often he had seen her, though, of course, she had never remarked him. He said he had been more distressed than he could tell, when he found

that she and her father were away, far away; but still not too far to prevent one from scrambling over the wall that made the road so long.

He said all this, and he said a great deal more; he told her how much she occupied his thoughts, and that it was on her account, and not for the sake of the shooting matches, that he had come to Interlaken.

Babette became very silent—it was almost too much, all that he confided to her.

As they walked on, the sun sank behind the lofty heights, and the Jungfrau stood in strong relief, clothed in a splendour and brilliancy reflected by the green woods of the surrounding hills. Everyone stood still and gazed at it; Rudy and Babette also stood and looked at the magnificent scene.

'Nothing can be more beautiful than this!' said Babette.

'Nothing!' said Rudy, with his eyes fixed upon Babette.

'To-morrow I must go,' he added a little after.

'Come and visit us at Bex,' whispered Babette; 'my father will be so glad to see you.'

ON THE WAY HOME.

OH! how much had not Rudy to carry next day when he started on his journey homewards over the mountains! He had actually to carry two handsome guns, three silver goblets, and a silver coffee-pot—the latter would be of use when he set up a house. But these valuables were not the weightiest load he had to bear; a still weightier load he had to carry—or did it carry him?—over the high, high hills.

The road was rough; the weather was dismal, gloomy, and rainy; the clouds hung like a mourning veil over the

summits of the mountains, and shrouded their shining peaks. From the woods had resounded the last stroke of the axe, and down the side of the hill rolled the trunks of the trees; they looked like sticks from the vast heights above, but nearer they were seen to be like the thick masts of ships. The river murmured with its monotonous sound, the wind whistled, the clouds began to sail hurriedly along.

Close by Rudy suddenly appeared a young girl; he had not observed her until she was quite near him. She also was going to cross the mountain. Her eyes had an extraordinary power; they seemed to have a spell in them—they were so clear, so deep, so unfathomable.

'Have you a lover?' asked Rudy. All his thoughts were filled with love.

'I have none,' she replied with a laugh, but it seemed as if she did not speak the truth. 'Let us not go the long way round. We must keep to the left; it is shorter.'

'Yes—to fall into some crevasse,' said Rudy. 'You should know the paths better if you take upon yourself to be a guide.'

'I know the way well,' she rejoined, 'and I have my

wits about me. Your thoughts are down yonder in the valley. Up here one should think of the Ice-maiden. Mankind say that she is not friendly to their race.'

'I am not in the least afraid of her,' said Rudy. 'She

The Tempter.

could not keep me when I was a child; she shall not catch me now I am a grown-up man.'

It became very dark, the rain fell, and it began to snow heavily; it dazzled the eyes, and blinded them.

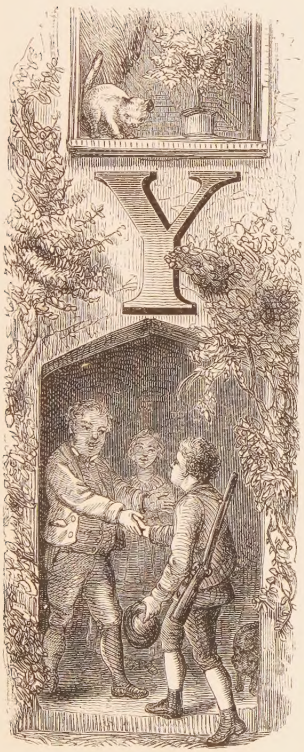
'Give me your hand, and I will help you to mount upwards,' said the girl, as she touched him with her ice-cold fingers.

'*You* help me!' cried Rudy. 'I do not yet require a woman's help in climbing;' and he walked on more briskly away from her. The snow-storm thickened like a curtain around him, the wind moaned, and behind him he heard the girl laughing and singing. It sounded so strangely. It was surely Glamourie, she surely, one of the attendants of the Ice-maiden; Rudy had heard of such things when, as a little boy, he had spent a night on the mountains, on his journey over the hills.

The snow fell more thickly, the clouds lay below him. He looked back; there was no one to be seen, but he heard laughter and jeering, and it did not seem to come from a human being.

When at length Rudy had reached the highest part of the mountain, where the path led down to the valley of the Rhone, he perceived on the pale blue of the horizon, in the direction of Chamouny, two glittering stars. They shone so brightly; and he thought of Babette, of himself, and of his happiness, and became warm with these thoughts.

THE VISIT TO THE MILL.



'YOU have really brought costly things home,' said his old foster-mother, and her strange eagle eyes sparkled, while she worked her thin wrinkled neck even more quickly than usual. 'You carry good luck with you, Rudy. I must kiss you, my dear boy.'

Rudy allowed himself to be kissed, but it was evident by his countenance that he did not relish this domestic greeting.

'How handsome you are, Rudy!' exclaimed the old woman.

'Oh! don't flatter me,' replied Rudy, laughing; but he was pleased at the compliment nevertheless.

'I repeat it,' said the old woman, 'and good fortune smiles on you.'

'Yes, I believe you are right there,' he said, while his thoughts strayed to Babette.

Never before had he longed so much for the deep valley.

'They must have come back,' he said to himself; 'it is now more than two days over the time they fixed for their return. I must go to Bex.'

And to Bex he went. The miller and his daughter were at home; he was well received, and many greetings were given to him from the family at Interlaken. Babette did not speak much; she had become very silent. But her eyes spoke, and that was quite enough for Rudy. The miller, who generally had enough to say, and was accustomed to joke and have all his jokes laughed at, for he was *the rich miller*, seemed to prefer listening to Rudy's stirring adventures, and hearing him tell of all the difficulties and dangers that the chamois-hunter had to encounter on the mountain heights—how he had to crawl along the unsafe snowy cornice-work on the edges of the hills, which was attached to the rocks by the force

of the wind and weather, and tread the frail bridges the snow-storm had cast over many a deep abyss.

Rudy spoke with much spirit, and his eyes sparkled while he described the life of a hunter, the cunning of the chamois and the wonderful springs they took, the mighty föhn, and the rolling avalanche. He observed that, at every new description, he won more and more upon the miller, and that the latter was particularly interested in his account of the lämmergeier and the bold royal eagle.

Not far from Bex, in the Canton Valais, there was an eagle's nest, built most ingeniously under a projecting platform of rock, on the margin of the hill; there was a young one in it, which no one could take. An Englishman had, a few days before, offered Rudy a large handful of gold if he would bring him the young eagle alive.

'But there are limits even to the most reckless daring,' said Rudy. 'The young eagle up there is not to be got at: it would be madness to make the attempt.'

And the wine circulated fast, and the conversation flowed on fast, and Rudy thought the evening was much

too short, although it was past midnight when he left the miller's house after this his first visit.

The lights shone for a short time through the windows, and were reflected on the green branches of the trees, while through the skylight on the roof, which was open, crept out the parlour cat, and met in the water conduit on the roof the kitchen cat.

'Do n't you see that there is something new going on here?' said the parlour cat. 'There is secret love-making in the house. The father knows nothing of it yet. Rudy and Babette have been all the evening treading on each other's toes under the table; they trod on me twice, but I did not mew, for that would have aroused suspicion.'

'Well, *I* would have done it,' said the kitchen cat.

'What might suit the kitchen would not do in the parlour,' replied the parlour cat. 'I should like very much to know what the miller will say when he hears of this engagement.'

Yes, indeed—what would the miller say? *That* Rudy also was anxious to know. He could not bring himself to wait long. Therefore, before many days had

passed, when the omnibus rolled over the bridge between the Cantons Valais and Vaud, Rudy sat in it, with plenty of confidence as usual, and pleasant thoughts of the favourable answer he expected that evening.

And when the evening had come, and the omnibus was returning, Rudy also sat in it, going homewards. But, at the miller's, the parlour cat jumped out again.

'Look here, you from the kitchen—the miller knows everything now. There was a strange end to the affair. Rudy came here towards the afternoon, and he and Babette had a great deal to whisper about; they stood on the path a little below the miller's room. I lay at their feet, but they had neither eyes nor thoughts for me.

'"I will go straight to your father," said Rudy; "my proposal is honest and honourable."

'"Shall I go with you," said Babette, "that I may give you courage?"

'"I have plenty of courage," replied Rudy, "but if you are with me, he must put some control upon himself, whether he likes the matter or not."

'So they went in. Rudy trod heavily on my tail—he

is very clumsy. I mewed, but neither he nor Babette had ears for me. They opened the door, and entered together, and I with them, but I sprang up to the back of a chair. I could scarcely hear what Rudy said, but I heard how

The Proposal.

the master blazed forth: it was a regular turning him out of his doors up to the mountains and the chamois. Rudy might look after these, but not after our little Babette.'

'But what did they say?' asked the kitchen cat.

'Say! they said all that is generally said under such circumstances when people go a-wooing. "I love her, and she loves me; and when there is milk in the can for one, there is milk in the can for two."

'"But she is far above you," said the miller; "she has lots of gold, and you have none. Don't you see that you cannot aspire to her?"

'"There is nothing or no one so high that one may not reach if one is only determined to do so," said Rudy, getting angry.

'"But you said not long since that you could not reach the young eagle in its nest. Babette is a still higher and more difficult prize for you to take."

'"I will take them both," replied Rudy.

'"Very well! I will give her to you when you bring me the young eaglet alive," said the miller, and he laughed until the tears stood in his eyes. "But now, thank you for your visit, Rudy! If you come again to-morrow, you will find no one at home. Farewell, Rudy!"

'And Babette also said farewell, in as timid and

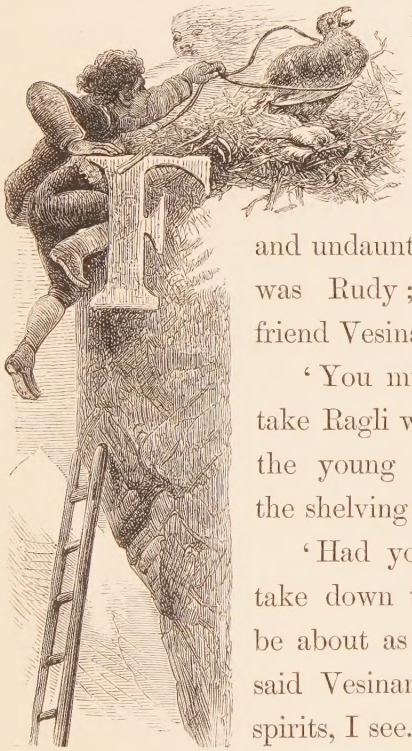
pitiable a voice as that of a little kitten which cannot see its mother.

'"A promise is a promise, and a man is a man!" said Rudy. "Do not weep, Babette; I shall bring the young eagle."

'"You will break your neck, I hope!" exclaimed the miller; "then we shall be free of this bad job." I call that sending him off with a flea in his ear! Now Rudy is gone, and Babette sits and cries, but the miller sings German songs which he learnt in his journey. I shall not distress myself about the matter; it would do no good.'

'But it is all very curious,' said the kitchen cat.

THE EAGLE'S NEST.



FROM the mountain path came the sound of a person whistling in a strain so lively that it betokened good-humour and undaunted courage. The whistler was Rudy; he was going to his friend Vesinand.

'You must help me! We shall take Ragli with us. I must carry off the young eagle up yonder under the shelving rock!'

'Had you not better try first to take down the moon? That would be about as hopeful an undertaking,' said Vesinand. 'You are in great spirits, I see.'

'Yes, for I am thinking of my wedding. But now,

to speak seriously, you shall know how matters stand with me.'

And Vesinand and Ragli were soon made acquainted with what Rudy wished.

'You are a daring fellow,' they said, 'but you won't succeed—you will break your neck.'

'One does not fall if one has no fear!' said Rudy.

About midnight they set out with alpenstocks, ladders, and ropes. The road lay through copsewood and brushwood, over rolling stones—upwards, always upwards, upwards in the dark and gloomy night. The waters roared below, the waters murmured above, humid clouds swept heavily along. The hunters reached at length the precipitous ridge of rock. It became even darker here, for the walls of rock almost met, and light penetrated only a little way down from the open space above. Close by, under them, was a deep abyss, with its hoarse-sounding, raging water.

They sat all three quite still. They had to await the dawn of day, when the parent eagle should fly out; then only could they fire if they had any hope to capture the young one. Rudy sat as still as if he had been a portion

of the rock on which he sat. He held his gun ready to fire; his eyes were steadily fixed on the highest part of the cleft, under a projecting rock of which the eagle's nest was concealed. The three hunters had long to wait.

The Eagle's Nest.

At length, high above them was heard a crashing, whirring noise; the air was darkened by a large object soaring in it. Two guns were ready to aim at the enormous eagle the moment it flew from its nest. A shot

was fired; for an instant the outspread wings fluttered, and then the bird began to sink slowly, and it seemed as if with its size and the stretch of its wings it would fill the whole chasm, and in its fall drag the hunters down with it. The eagle disappeared in the abyss below; the cracking of the trees and bushes was heard, which were snapped and crushed in the fall of the stupendous bird.

And now commenced the business that had brought the hunters there. Three of the longest ladders were tied securely together. They were intended to reach the outermost and last stepping-place on the margin of the abyss; but they did not reach so high up, and smooth as a well-built wall was the perpendicular rocky ascent a good way higher up, where the nest was hidden under the shelter of the uppermost projecting portion of rock. After some consultation the young men came to the conclusion, that there was nothing better to be done than to hoist far up two more ladders tied together, and then to attach these to the three which had already been raised. With immense difficulty they pushed the two ladders up, and the ropes were made fast; the ladders shot out from over the rock, and hung there swaying in

the air above the unfathomable depth beneath. Rudy had placed himself already on the lowest step. It was an ice-cold morning; the mist was rising heavily from the dark chasm below. Rudy sat as a fly sits upon some swinging straw which a bird, building its nest, might have dropped on the edge of the lofty eyrie it had chosen for its site; but the insect could fly if the straw gave way—Rudy could but break his neck. The wind was howling around him, and away in the abyss below roared the gushing water from the melting glacier—the Ice-maiden's palace.

His ascent set the ladder into a tremulous motion, as the spider does which holds fast to its long waving slender thread. When Rudy had gained the top of the fourth ladder, he felt more confidence in them: he knew that they had been bound together by sure and skilful hands, though they dangled as if they had had but slight fastenings.

But there was even more dangerous work before Rudy than mounting a line of ladders that now swayed like a frame of rushes in the air, and now knocked against the perpendicular rock: he had to climb as a cat climbs.

But Rudy could do that, thanks to the cat who had taught him. He did not perceive the presence of Vertigo, who trod the air behind him, and stretched forth her polypus-arms after him. He gained, at length, the last step of the highest ladder, and then he observed that he had not got high enough even to see into the nest. It was only by using his hands that he could raise himself up to it; he tried if the lowest part of the thick interlaced underwood, which formed the base of the nest, was sufficiently strong; and when he had assured himself that the stunted trees were firm, he swung himself up by them from the ladder, until his head and breast had reached the level of the nest. But then poured forth on him a stifling stench of carrion; for putrefied lambs, chamois, and birds lay there crowded together.

Swimming-in-the-Head, a sister to Vertigo, though it could not overpower him, puffed the disgusting almost poisonous odour into his face, that he might become faint; and down below, in the black yawning ravine, upon the dank dashing waters, sat the Ice-maiden herself, with her long pale green hair, and gazed upwards with her death-giving eyes, while she exclaimed—

'Now I will seize you!'

In a corner of the eagle's nest, Rudy beheld the eaglet sitting—a large and powerful creature, even though it could not yet fly. Rudy fixed his eyes on it, held on marvellously with one hand, and with the other hand cast a noose around the young eagle; it was captured alive, its legs were in the tightened cord, and Rudy flung the sling with the bird over his shoulder, so that the creature hung a good way down beneath him, as, with the help of a rope, he held on, until his foot touched at last the highest step of the ladder.

'Hold fast! do n't fear to fall, and you will not do so!' Such was his early lesson, and Rudy acted on it: he held fast, crept down, and did not fall.

Then arose a shout of joy and congratulation. Rudy stood safely on the rocky ground, laden with his prize, the young eagle.

WHAT MORE THE PARLOUR CAT HAD TO TELL.

HERE is what you demanded!' said Rudy, as he entered the miller's house at Bex, and placed on the floor a large basket. When he took its cover off, there glared forth two yellow eyes surrounded with a dark ring—eyes so flashing, so wild, that they looked as though they would burn or blast everything they saw; the short hard beak opened to bite; the neck was red and downy.

'The young eagle!'

exclaimed the miller. Babette screamed, and sprang to one side, but could not take her eyes off from Rudy and the eaglet.

'You are not to be frightened!' said the miller, addressing Rudy.

'And you will keep your word,' said Rudy; 'everyone has his object.'

'But how is it that you did not break your neck?' asked the miller.

'Because I held fast,' replied Rudy; 'and so I do now—I hold fast to Babette.'

'Wait till you get her!' said the miller, laughing, and Babette thought that was a good sign.

'Let us take the young eagle out of the basket; it is frightful to see how its eyes glare. How did you manage to capture it?'

Rudy had to describe his feat, and, as he spoke, the miller's eyes opened wider and wider.

'With your confidence and your good fortune, you might maintain three wives,' said the miller.

'Oh, thank you!' cried Rudy.

'But you won't get Babette just yet,' said the miller,

slapping the young Alpine hunter with good-humour on his shoulder.

'Do you know, there is something going on again here!' said the parlour cat to the kitchen cat. 'Rudy has brought us the young eagle, and takes Babette as his reward. They have kissed each other in the father's presence! That was as good as a betrothal. The old man did not storm at all; he kept in his claws, took an afternoon nap, and left the two to sit and chatter to each other. They have so much to say that they will not be tired talking till Christmas.'

And they were not tired talking till Christmas. The wind whirled in eddies through the groves, and shook down the yellow leaves; the snow-drifts appeared in the valleys as well as on the lofty hills; the Ice-maiden sat in her proud palace, which she occupied during the winter-time; the upright walls of rock were covered with sleet; enormous masses of ice-tapestry were to be seen where, in summer, the mountain streams came pouring down; fantastic garlands of crystal ice hung over the snow-powdered pine-trees. The Ice-maiden rode on the howling wind,

over the deepest dales. The carpet of snow was laid as far down as Bex; she could go there, and see Rudy in the house where he now passed so much of his time with Babette. The wedding was to take place in summer, and

The Path of the Ice-maiden.

they heard enough of it—their friends talked so much about it.

There came sunshine; the most beautiful Alpine roses bloomed. The lovely laughing Babette was as

charming as the early spring—the spring which makes all the birds sing of summer-time, when was to be the wedding-day.

'How these two do sit and hang over each other!' exclaimed the parlour cat. 'I am sick of all this stuff.'

THE ICE-MAIDEN'S SCORN OF MANKIND.

SPRING had unfolded her fresh green garlands of walnut and chestnut trees which were bursting into bloom, particularly in the country that extends from the bridge at St. Maurice to the Lake of Geneva and the banks of the Rhone, which, with wild speed, rushes from its source under the green glaciers—the Ice-palace where the Ice-maiden dwells—whence, on the keen wind, she permits herself to be borne up to the highest fields of snow, and, in the warm sunshine, reclines on their drifting masses. Here she sat, and gazed fixedly down into the deep valley beneath, where human beings,

like ants on a sunlit stone, were to be seen busily moving about.

'Beings of mental power, as the children of the sun call you,' cried the Ice-maiden, 'ye are but vermin! Let a snowball but roll down, and you and your houses and your villages are crushed and overwhelmed.' And she raised her proud head higher, and looked with death-threatening eyes around her and below her. But from the valley arose a strange sound: it was the blasting of rocks—the work of men—the forming of roads and tunnels before the railway was laid down.

'They are working underground like moles; they are digging passages in the rock, and therefore are heard these sounds like the reports of guns. I shall remove my palaces, for the noise is greater than the roar of thunder itself.'

There ascended from the valley a thick smoke, which seemed agitated like a fluttering veil: it came curling up from the locomotive, which upon the newly opened railway drew the train, that, carriage linked to carriage, looked like a winding serpent. With an arrow's speed it shot past.

'They pretend to be the masters down yonder, these powers of mind!' exclaimed the Ice-maiden; 'but the mighty powers of nature are still the rulers.'

The Ice-maiden.

And she laughed, she sang; her voice resounded through the valley.

'An avalanche is falling!' cried the people down there.

Then the children of the sun sang in louder strains

about the power of thought in mankind. It commands all, it brings the wide ocean under the yoke, levels mountains, fills up valleys; the power of thought in mankind makes them lords over the powers of nature.

Just at that moment, there came, crossing the snow-field where the Ice-maiden sat, a party of travellers; they had bound themselves fast to each other, to be as one large body upon the slippery ice, near the deep abyss.

'Vermin!' she exclaimed. '*You* the lords of the powers of nature!' and she turned away from them, and looked scornfully towards the deep valley, where the railway train was rushing by.

'There they go, these thoughts! They are full of might; I see them everywhere. One stands alone like a king, others stand in a group, and yonder half of them are asleep. And when the steam-engine stops still, they get out and go their way. The thoughts then go forth into the world.' And she laughed.

'There goes another avalanche!' said the inhabitants of the valley.

'It will not reach us,' cried two who sat together in the train—'two souls, but one mind,' as has been said.

These were Rudy and Babette; the miller accompanied them.

'Like baggage,' he said, 'I am with them as a sort of necessary appendage.'

'There sit the two,' said the Ice-maiden. 'Many a chamois have I crushed, millions of Alpine roses have I snapped and broken, not a root left—I destroyed them all! Thought—power of mind, indeed!'

And she laughed again.

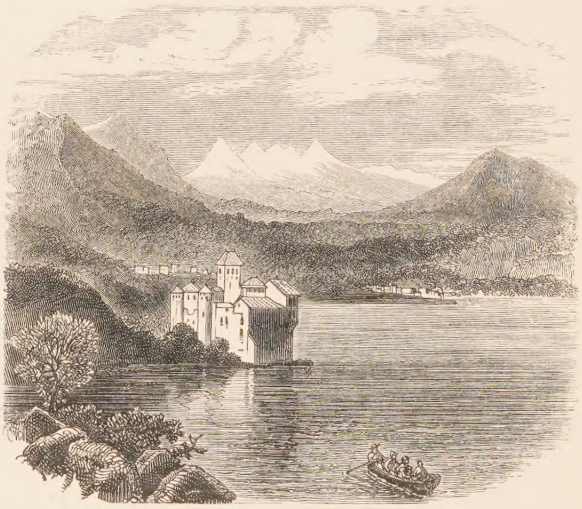
'There goes another avalanche!' said those down in the valley.

THE GODMOTHER.

AT Montreux, one of the nearest towns, which, with Clarens, Bernex, and Crin, encircle the north-east part of the Lake of Geneva, resided Babette's godmother, the distinguished English lady, with her daughters and a young relation. They had only lately arrived, yet the miller had already paid them a visit, announced Babette's engagement, and told about Rudy and the young eagle, the visit to Interlaken —in short, the whole story; and it had highly interested his hearers, and pleased them with Rudy, Babette, and even the miller himself. They were

invited all three to come to Montreux, and they went. Babette ought to see her godmother, and her godmother wished to see her.

At the little town of Villeneuve, about the end of the



Chillon.

Lake of Geneva, lay the steamboat, that, in a voyage of half an hour, went from thence to Bernex, a little way below Montreux. It is a coast which has often been celebrated in song by poets. There, under the walnut-

trees, on the banks of the deep bluish-green lake, Byron sat, and wrote his melodious verses about the prisoner in the gloomy mountain castle of Chillon. There, where Clarens is reflected amidst weeping willows in the clear water, wandered Rousseau, dreaming of Eloise. The river Rhone glides away under the lofty snow-clad hills of Savoy; here there lies not far from its mouth a small island, so small that from the shore it looks as if it were but a toy islet. It is a patch of rocky ground, which about a century ago a lady caused to be walled round and covered with earth, in which three acacia-trees were planted; these now overshadow the whole island. Babette had always been charmed with this little islet; she thought it the loveliest spot that was to be seen on the whole voyage. She said she would like so much to land there—she must land there—it would be so delightful under these beautiful trees. But the steamer passed it by, and did not stop until it had reached Bernex.

The little party proceeded thence up amidst the white sunlit walls that surrounded the vineyards in front of the little town of Montreux, where the peasants' houses are

shaded by fig-trees, and laurels and cypresses grow in the gardens. Half-way up the ascent stood the boarding-house where the godmother lived.

The meeting was very cordial. The godmother was a stout pleasant-looking woman, with a round smiling face. When a child she must certainly have exhibited quite a Raphael-like cherub's head; it was still an angel's head, but older, and with silver-white hair clustering round it. The daughters were well-dressed, elegant-looking, tall and slender. The young cousin who was with them, and who was dressed in white almost from top to toe, and had red hair and red whiskers large enough to have been divided among three gentlemen, began immediately to pay the utmost attention to little Babette.

Splendidly bound books and drawings were lying on the large table; music-books were also to be seen in the room. The balcony looked out upon the beautiful lake, which was so bright and calm that the mountains of Savoy, with their villages, woods, and snow-peaks, were clearly reflected in it.

Rudy, who was generally so lively and so undaunted, found himself not at all at his ease. He was obliged to

be as much on his guard as if he were walking on peas over a slippery floor. How tediously time passed! It was like being in a treadmill. And now they were to go out to walk! This was quite as tiresome. Two steps forward and one backward Rudy had to take to keep pace with the others. Down to Chillon, the gloomy old castle on the rocky island, they went, to look at instruments of torture and dungeons, rusty fetters attached to the rocky walls, stone pallets for those condemned to death, trap-doors through which the unfortunate creatures were hurled down to fall upon iron spikes amidst burning piles. They called it a pleasure to look at all these! A dreadful place of execution it was, elevated by Byron's verse into the world of poetry. Rudy viewed it only as a place of execution. He leaned against the wide stone embrasure of the window, and gazed down on the deep blue-green of the water, and over to the little solitary island with the three acacias: how much he wished himself there—free from the whole babbling party!

But Babette felt quite happy. She had been excessively amused, she said afterwards; the cousin had 'found her perfect.'

'Oh yes—mere idle talk!' replied Rudy; and this was the first time he had ever said anything that did not please her.

The Englishman had made her a present of a little book as a souvenir of Chillon; it was Byron's poem, the 'Prisoner of Chillon,' translated into French, so that Babette was able to read it.

'The book may be good enough,' said Rudy, 'but the nicely combed fop who gave it to you is no favourite of mine.'

'He looks like a meal-sack without meal,' cried the miller, laughing at his own wit.

Rudy laughed too, and said it was an excellent remark.

THE COUSIN.

WHEN Rudy a few days afterwards went to pay a visit to the miller, he found the young Englishman there. Babette had just placed before him a plate of trout, and she had taken much pains to decorate the dish. Rudy thought that was unnecessary. What was the Englishman doing there? What did he want? Why was he thus served and pampered by Babette? Rudy was jealous, and that pleased Babette. It amused her to see all the feelings of his heart—the strong and the weak. Love was to her as yet but a pastime, and she played with Rudy's

whole heart; but nevertheless it is certain that he was the centre of all her thoughts—the dearest, the most valued in this world. Still, the more gloomy he looked, the merrier her eyes laughed. She could almost have kissed the fair Englishman with the red whiskers, if she could by doing this have seen Rudy rush out in a rage; it would have shown her how greatly she was beloved by him.

This was not right, not wise in little Babette; but she was only nineteen years of age. She did not reflect on her unkindness to Rudy; still less did she think how her conduct might appear to the young Englishman, or if it were not lighter and more wanting in propriety than became the miller's modest, lately betrothed daughter.

Where the highway from Bex passes under the snow-clad rocky heights, which, in the language of the country, are called *Diablerets*, stood the mill, not far from a rapid rushing mountain stream of a greyish-white colour and looking as if covered with soap-suds. It was not that which turned the mill, but a smaller stream, which on the other side of the river came tumbling down the rocks, and through a circular reservoir surrounded by stones in the road beneath, with its violence and speed

forced itself up and ran into an enclosed basin, a wide dam which, above the rushing river, turned the large wheel of the mill. When the dam was full of water, it overflowed, and caused the path to be so damp and slippery that it was difficult to walk on it, and there was the chance of a fall into the water, and being carried by it more swiftly than pleasantly towards the mill. Such a mishap had nearly befallen the young Englishman. Equipped in white like a miller's man, he was climbing the path in the evening, guided by the light that shone from Babette's chamber window. He had never learned to climb, and had almost gone head foremost into the water, but escaped with wet arms and bespattered clothes. Covered with mud and dirty-looking, he arrived beneath Babette's window, clambered up the old linden-tree, and there began to mimic the owl—no other bird could he attempt to imitate. Babette heard the sounds, and peeped through the thin curtains; but when she saw the man in white and felt certain who he was, her little heart beat with terror, and also with anger. She quickly extinguished her light, felt if the window were securely fastened, and then left him to screech at his leisure.

How terrible it would be if Rudy were now at the mill! But Rudy was not at the mill: no—it was much worse—he was close by outside. High words were spoken—angry words—there might be blows, there might even be murder!

Babette's First Trouble.

Babette hastened to open her window, and, calling Rudy's name, bade him go away, adding that she could not permit him to remain there.

'You will not permit me to remain here!' he exclaimed. 'Then this is an appointment! You are expecting some good friend—some one whom you prefer to me! Shame on you, Babette!'

'You are unbearable!' cried Babette; 'I hate you!' and she burst into tears. 'Go—go!'

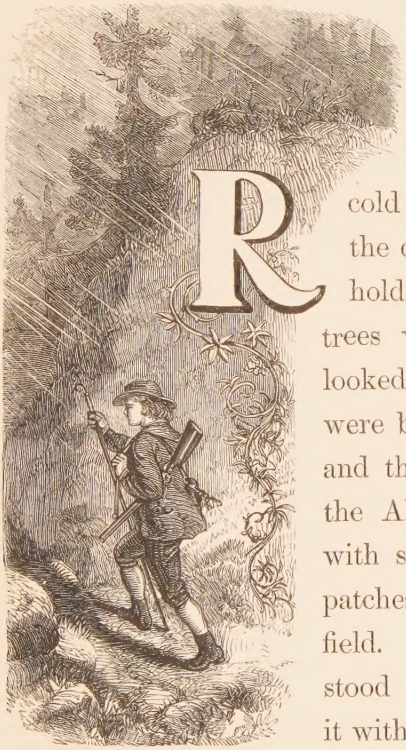
'I have not deserved this,' said Rudy, as he went away, his cheeks like fire, his heart like fire.

Babette threw herself weeping on her bed.

'And you can think ill of me, Rudy—of me who love you so dearly!'

She was angry—very angry, and that was good for her; she would otherwise have been deeply afflicted. As it was, she could fall asleep and slumber as only youth can do.

EVIL POWERS.



RUDY left Bex, and took his way homewards, choosing the path up the mountains, with its cold fresh air, where, amidst the deep snow, the Ice-maiden holds her sway. The largest trees with their thick foliage looked, so far below, as if they were but potato tops; the pines and the bushes became smaller; the Alpine roses were covered with snow, which lay in single patches, like linen on a bleach-field. One solitary blue gentian stood in his path; he crushed it with the butt-end of his gun. Higher up two chamois showed themselves. Rudy's

eyes sparkled, and his thoughts took flight into another channel, but he was not near enough for a sure aim. Higher still he ascended, where only a few blades of grass grew amidst the blocks of ice. The chamois passed in peace over the fields of snow. Rudy pressed angrily on; thick mists gathered around him, and presently he found himself on the brink of the steep precipice of rock. The rain began to fall in torrents. He felt a burning thirst; his head was hot, his limbs were cold. He sought for his hunting flask, but it was empty: he had not given it a thought when he rushed up the mountains. He had never been ill in his life, but now he experienced a sensation like illness. He was very tired, and felt a strong desire to throw himself down and sleep, but water was streaming all around him. He tried to rouse himself, but every object seemed to be dancing in a strange manner before his eyes.

Suddenly he beheld what he had never before seen there—a newly built low hut that leaned against the rock, and in the doorway stood a young girl. He thought she was the schoolmaster's daughter, Annette, whom he had once kissed in the dance, but she was not

Annette; yet certainly he had seen her before, perhaps near Grindelwald the evening he was returning home from the shooting matches at Interlaken.

'How did you come here?' he asked.

'I am at home,' she replied; 'I am watching my flocks.'

'Your flocks! Where do they find grass? Here there is nothing but snow and rocks.'

'You know much about it, to be sure!' she said, laughing. 'Behind this, a little way down, is a very nice piece of pasture land. My goats go there. I take good care of them; I never miss one; I keep what belongs to me.'

'You are stout-hearted,' said Rudy.

'And so are you,' she answered.

'If you have any milk, pray give me some; my thirst is almost intolerable.'

'I have something better than milk,' she replied; 'you shall have that. To-day some travellers came here with their guides; they left half a flask of wine behind them. They will not return for it, and I shall not drink it, so you shall have it.'

She went for the wine, poured it into a wooden goblet, and gave it to Rudy.

'It is excellent,' said he; 'I never tasted any wine so warming, so reviving.' And his eyes beamed with a wondrous brilliancy; there came a thrill of enjoyment, a glow over him, as if every sorrow and every vexation were vanishing from his mind; the free gushing feeling of man's nature awoke in him.

'But you are surely Annette, the schoolmaster's daughter,' he exclaimed. 'Give me a kiss.'

'First give me the pretty ring you wear on your finger.'

'My betrothal ring?'

'Yes, just it,' said the girl; and, replenishing the goblet with wine, she held it to his lips, and again he drank. A strange sense of pleasure seemed to rush into his very blood. The whole world was his, he seemed to fancy—why torment himself? Everything is given for our gratification and enjoyment. The stream of life is the stream of happiness: flow on with it, let yourself be borne away on it—that is felicity. He gazed on the young girl. She was Annette, and yet *not* Annette; still

less was she the magical phantom, as he had called *her* whom he had met near Grindelwald. The girl up here upon the mountain was fresh as the new-fallen snow, blooming like an Alpine rose, and lively as a kid; yet

Rudy loses the Ring.

still formed from Adam's rib, a human being like Rudy himself. And he flung his arms around her, and gazed into her marvellously clear eyes. It was only for a moment; and in that moment—how shall it be expressed,

how described in words? Was it the life of the spirit or the life of death which took possession of him? Was he raised higher, or was he sinking down into the deep icy abyss, deeper, always deeper? He beheld the walls of ice shining like blue-green glass; endless crevasses yawned around him, and the waters dripped with a sound like the chime of bells—they were clear as a pearl lighted by pale blue flames. The Ice-maiden kissed him; it chilled him through his whole body. He uttered a cry of horror, broke resolutely away from her, stumbled and fell; all became dark to his eyes, but he opened them again. The evil powers had played their game.

The Alpine girl was gone, the sheltering hut was gone; water poured down the naked rocks, and snow lay all around. Rudy was shivering with cold, soaked through to the very skin, and his ring was gone—the betrothal ring Babette had given him. His gun lay on the snow close by him; he took it up, and tried to discharge it, but it missed fire. Damp clouds rested like thick masses of snow on the mountain clefts. Vertigo sat there, and glared upon her powerless prey, and beneath her rang through the deep crevasse a sound as if a mass

of rock had fallen down, and was crushing and carrying away everything that opposed it in its furious descent.

At the miller's, Babette sat and wept. Six days had elapsed since Rudy had been there—he who was in the wrong, he who ought to ask her forgiveness, for she loved him with her whole heart.

AT THE MILLER'S HOUSE.

OW frightfully foolish mankind are!' said the parlour cat to the kitchen cat. 'It is all broken off now between Babette and Rudy. She sits and cries, and he thinks no more about her.'

'I do n't like that,' said the kitchen cat.

'Nor I either,' replied the parlour cat, 'but I am not going to distress myself about it. Babette can take the red whiskers for her sweetheart. He has not been here since the evening he wanted to go on the roof.'

The powers of evil carry on their game without and within us. Rudy was aware of

this, and he reflected on it. What had passed around him and within him up yonder on the mountain? Was it sin, or was it a fever dream? He had never known fever or illness before. While he blamed Babette, he took a retrospective glance within himself. He thought of the wild tornado in his heart, the hot whirlwind which had recently broken loose there. Could he confess all to Babette—every thought which, in the hour of temptation, might have been carried out? He had lost her ring, and in this very loss she had won him back. Was any confession due from her to him? He felt as if his heart were breaking when his thoughts reverted to her—so many recollections crowded on his mind. He saw in her a laughing merry child, full of life; many an affectionate word she had addressed to him in the fulness of her heart, came, like a ray of the sun, to gladden his soul, and soon it was all sunshine there for Babette.

She must, however, apologise to him, and she should do so.

He went to the miller's, and confession followed: it began with a kiss, and ended in Rudy's being the sinner. His great fault was that he could have doubted Babette's

constancy—*that* was too bad of him! Such distrust, such impetuosity, might cause misery to them both. Yes, very true! and therefore Babette preached him a little sermon, which pleased herself vastly, and during which she

Babette's Lecture.

looked very pretty. But, in one particular, Rudy was right—the godmother's nephew was a mere babbler. She would burn the book he had given her, and not keep the slightest article that would remind her of him.

'Well, it is all right again,' said the parlour cat. 'Rudy has come back, they have made friends; and that is the greatest of pleasures, they say.'

'I heard during the night,' said the kitchen cat, 'the rats declaring that the greatest of pleasures was to eat candle-grease and to banquet on tainted meat. Which of them is to be believed, the lovers or the rats?'

'Neither of them,' replied the parlour cat. 'It is always safest to believe no one.'

The greatest happiness for Rudy and Babette was about to take place; the auspicious day, as it is called, was approaching—their wedding-day!

But not in the church at Bex, not at the miller's house, was the wedding to be solemnised: the godmother had requested that the marriage should be celebrated at her abode, and that the ceremony should be performed in the pretty little church at Montreux. The miller was very urgent that this arrangement should be agreed to; he alone knew what the godmother intended to bestow on the young couple: they were to receive from her a wedding gift that was well worth such a small concession to her wishes. The day was fixed; they were to go to

Villeneuve the evening before, in order to proceed by an early steamer next morning to Montreux, that the godmother's daughters might adorn the bride.

'There ought to be a second day's wedding here in this house,' said the parlour cat; 'else I am sure I would not give a mew for the whole affair.'

'There is going to be a grand feast,' replied the kitchen cat. 'Ducks and pigeons have been killed, and an entire deer hangs against the wall. My mouth waters when I look at all this. To-morrow they commence their journey.'

Yes, to-morrow! That evening Rudy and Babette sat as a betrothed couple for the last time at the miller's house. Outside was to be seen the Alpine glow; the evening bells were ringing; the daughters of the sun sang, 'That which is best will be!'

NIGHT VISIONS.

THE sun had set; the clouds lay low in the valley of the Rhone; amidst the lofty mountains, the wind blew from the south—an African wind. Suddenly over the high Alps there arose a 'föhn,' which swept the clouds asunder; and when the wind had lulled, all became, for a moment, perfectly still. The scattered clouds hung in fantastic forms amidst the wooded hills that skirted the rapid Rhone; they hung in forms like those of the

marine animals of the antediluvian world, like eagles hovering in the air, and like frogs springing in a marsh; they sank down over the gushing river, and seemed to sail upon it, yet it was in the air they sailed. The current carried with it an uprooted pine-tree; the water whirled in eddies around it. It was Vertigo and some of her sisters that were thus dancing in circles upon the foaming stream. The moon shone on the snow-capped hills, on the dark woods, on the curious white clouds—those appearances of the night that seem to be the spirits of nature. The mountain peasant saw them through his little window; they sailed outside in hosts before the Ice-maiden who came from her glacier palace. She sat on a frail skiff, the uprooted pine; the water from the glaciers bore her down to the river near the lake.

'The wedding guests are coming!' the air and the waters seemed to murmur and to sing.

Warnings without, warnings within! Babette had an extraordinary dream.

It seemed to her as if she were married to Rudy, and had been so for many years; that he was out chamois-hunting, but she was at home; and that the young

Englishman with the red whiskers was sitting with her. His eyes were full of passion, his words had as it were a magic power in them; he held out his hand to her, and she felt compelled to go with him; they went forth from her home, and went always downwards. And Babette felt as if there were a weight in her heart, which was becoming every moment heavier. She was committing a sin against Rudy—a sin against God. And suddenly she found herself forsaken; her dress was torn to pieces by thorns, her hair was grey. She looked upwards in deep distress, and on the margin of a mountain ridge she beheld Rudy. She stretched her arms up towards him, but did not dare either to call to him or to pray; and neither would have been of any avail, for she soon perceived that it was not himself, but only his shooting jacket and cap, which were hanging on an alpenstock, as hunters sometimes place them to deceive the chamois. And in great misery Babette exclaimed—

'O that I had died on my wedding-day—the day that was the happiest of my life! O Lord my God! that would have been a mercy—a blessing! That would have been the best thing that could have happened for me and

Rudy. No one knows his future fate.' And in impious despair she cast herself down into the deep mountain chasm. A string seemed to have broken—a tone of sorrow was echoed around.

Babette's Dream.

Babette awoke. Her vision was at an end, and what had happened in the dream-world had partially vanished from her mind; but she knew that she had dreamt something frightful, and dreamt about the young Englishman,

whom she had not seen or thought of for several months. Could he still be at Montreux? Would she see him at her wedding? A slight shade of displeasure stole around Babette's pretty mouth, and for a moment her eyebrows knitted; but soon came a smile and a gay sparkle in her eye. The sun was shining so brightly without, and to-morrow was her and Rudy's wedding-day!

He was already in the parlour when she came down, and shortly after they set off for Villeneuve. The two were all happiness, and the miller likewise; he laughed and joked, and was in the highest spirits. A kind father, a good soul, he was.

'Now we have the house to ourselves,' said the parlour cat.

THE CONCLUSION.

IT was not yet late in the day when the three joyous travellers reached Villeneuve. After they had dined, the miller placed himself in a comfortable arm-chair with his pipe, intending, when he had done smoking, to take a short nap. The affianced couple went arm in arm out of the town, along the high road, under the wooded hills that bordered the blue-green lake. The grey walls and heavy towers of the melancholy-looking Chillon were reflected in the clear water. The little island with the

three acacias seemed quite near: it looked like a bouquet on the calm lake.

'How charming it must be over yonder!' exclaimed Babette, who felt again the greatest desire to go to it; and her wish might be gratified at once, for a boat was lying close to the bank, and the rope by which it was secured was easy to undo. There was no one to be seen of whom they could ask permission to take it, so they got into it without leave. Rudy knew very well how to row. The oars, like the fins of a fish, divided the mass of water that is so pliant and yet so potent, so strong to bear, so ready to swallow—gentle, smiling, smoothness itself, and yet terror-inspiring and mighty to destroy. A line of foam floated behind the boat, which, in a few minutes, arrived at the little island, where the happy pair immediately landed. There was just room for two to dance.

Rudy swung Babette three or four times round, and then they sat down on the little bench under the drooping acacia, and looked into each other's eyes, and held each other's hands, while around them streamed the last rays of the setting sun. The pine forests on the hills

assumed a purplish red tint resembling the hue of the blooming heather ; and where the trees stopped, and the bare rocks stood forward, there was a rich lustre, as if the mountain were transparent. The skies were brilliant with a crimson glow ; the whole lake was covered with a tinge of pink, as if it had been thickly strewn with fresh blushing roses. As the shades of evening gathered around the snow-decked mountains of Savoy, they became of a dark blue in colour, but the highest peaks shone like red lava, and for a moment reflected their light on the mountain forms before these vast masses were lost in darkness. It was the Alpine glow, and Rudy and Babette thought they had never before beheld one so magnificent. The snow-bedecked *Dent du Midi* gleamed like the disk of the full moon when it shows itself above the horizon.

'Oh, what beauty! oh, what pleasure!' exclaimed the lovers at the same time.

'Earth can bestow no more on me,' said Rudy ; 'an evening like this is as a whole life. How often have I been sensible of my good fortune, as I am sensible of it now, and have thought that, if everything were to come at

once to an end for me, I have lived a happy life! What a blessed world is this! One day ends, but another begins, and I always fancy the last is the brightest. Our Lord is infinitely good, Babette.'

'I am so happy,' she whispered.

'Earth can bestow no more on me,' repeated Rudy. And the evening bells rang from the hills of Savoy and the mountains of Switzerland. In golden splendour stood forth towards the west the dark-blue Jura.

'God grant you all that is brightest and best!' exclaimed Babette fervently.

'He will,' said Rudy; 'to-morrow will fulfil that wish. To-morrow you will be wholly mine—my own little charming wife.'

'The boat!' cried Babette at that moment.

The boat which was to take them across again had got loose, and was drifting away from the island.

'I will bring it back,' said Rudy, as he took off his coat and boots, and, springing into the lake, swam vigorously towards the boat.

Cold and deep was the clear bluish-green icy water from the glacier of the mountain. Rudy looked down

into it—he took but a glance, yet he saw a gold ring trembling, glittering, and playing there. He thought of his lost betrothal ring, and the ring became larger and extended itself out into a sparkling circle, within which appeared the clear glacier; endless deep chasms yawned around it, and the water dropped tinkling like the sound of bells, and gleaming with pale blue flames. In a second he beheld what it will take many words to describe. Young hunters and young girls, men and women who had been lost in the crevasses of the glacier, stood there, lifelike, with open eyes and smiling lips; and far beneath them arose from buried villages the church bells' chimes. Multitudes knelt under the vaulted roofs; ice-blocks formed the organ-pipes, and the mountain torrents made the music. The Ice-maiden sat on the clear transparent ground; she raised herself up towards Rudy, and kissed his feet, and there passed throughout his limbs a death-like chill, an electric shock—ice and fire: it was impossible to distinguish one from the other in the quick touch.

'Mine! mine!' sounded around him and within him. 'I kissed thee when thou wert little—kissed thee on thy

mouth! Now I kiss thee on thy feet; now thou art wholly mine!'

And he disappeared in the clear blue water.

All was still around. The church bells had ceased to ring; their last tones had died away along with the last streak of red on the skies above.

'Thou art mine!' resounded in the depths below. 'Thou art mine!' resounded from beyond the heights—from infinity!

Happy to pass from love to love, from earth to heaven!

A string seemed to have broken—a tone of sorrow was echoed around. The ice-kiss of death had triumphed over the corruptible; the prelude to the drama of life had ended before the game itself had begun. All that seemed harsh, or sounded harshly, had subsided into harmony.

Do you call this a sad story?

Poor Babette! For her it was an hour of anguish. The boat drifted farther and farther away. No one on the mainland knew that the betrothed couple had gone over to the little island. The evening advanced, the

clouds gathered, darkness came. Alone, despairing, wailing, she stood there. A furious storm came on; the lightning played over the Jura mountains, and over those of Switzerland and Savoy; from all sides flash followed upon flash, while the peals of thunder rolled in all directions for many minutes at a time. One moment the lightning was so vivid that all around became as bright as day—every single vine stem could be seen as distinctly as at the hour of noon—and in another moment the blackest darkness enveloped all. The lightning darted in zigzags around the lake, and the roar of the thunder was echoed among the surrounding hills. On land the boats were drawn far up the beach, and all that were living had sought shelter. And now the rain poured down in torrents.

'Where can Rudy and Babette be in this awful weather?' said the miller.

Babette sat with folded hands, with her head in her lap, exhausted by grief, by screaming, by weeping.

'In the deep water,' she sobbed to herself, 'far down yonder, as under a glacier, *he* lies.'

She remembered what Rudy had told her about his

mother's death, and of his being saved himself when taken up apparently dead from the cleft in the glacier. 'The Ice-maiden has him again!'

And there came a flash of lightning as dazzling as the sun's rays on the white snow. Babette looked up. The lake rose at that moment like a shining glacier: the Ice-maiden stood there, majestic, pale, glittering, and at her feet lay Rudy's corpse.

'Mine!' she cried, and again all around was gloom, and darkness, and torrents of rain.

'Terrible!' groaned Babette. 'Why should he die just when our happy day was so close at hand? Great God, enlighten my understanding—shed light upon my heart! I comprehend not Thy ways, determined by Thine almighty power and wisdom.'

And God *did* shed light on her heart. A retrospective glance—a sense of grace—her dream of the preceding night—all crowded together on her mind. She remembered the words she had spoken—a wish for that which might be best for herself and Rudy.

'Woe is me! Was it the germ of sin in my heart? Was my dream a glimpse into the future, whose course

had to be thus violently arrested to save me from guilt? Unhappy wretch that I am!'

She sat wailing there in the pitch-dark night. During the deep stillness seemed to ring around her Rudy's words—the last he had ever spoken—'Earth can bestow no more on me!' Their sound was fraught with the fulness of joy; they were echoed amidst the depths of grief.

Some few years have elapsed since then. The lake smiles, its shores smile; the vines bear luscious grapes; steamboats with waving flags glide swiftly by; pleasure-boats with their two unfurled sails skim like white butterflies over the watery mirror; the railway beyond Chillon is open, and it goes far into the valley of the Rhone. At every station strangers issue from it—they come with their red-bound guide-books, and study therein what they ought to see. They visit Chillon, observe in the lake the little island with the three acacias, and read in the book about a bridal pair who, in the year 1856, rowed over to it one afternoon—of the bridegroom's death, and that not till the next

morning were heard upon the shore the bride's despairing cries.

But the guide-book gives no account of Babette's quiet life at her father's house—not at the mill (strangers

Babette's Solace.

now live there), but at a pretty spot whence from her window she can often look beyond the chestnut-trees to the snowy hills over which Rudy loved to range; she can see at the hour of evening the Alpine glow—up

where the children of the sun revel, and repeat their song about the wanderer whose cap the whirlwind carried off, but it could not take himself.

There is a rosy tint upon the mountain's snow—there is a rosy tint in every heart, which admits the thought, 'God ordains what is best for us!' But it is not vouchsafed to us all so fully to feel this, as it was to Babette in her dream.

THE BUTTERFLY.

THE BUTTERFLY.

THE Butterfly was looking out for a bride, and naturally he wished to select a nice one among the flowers. He looked at them, sitting so quietly and discreetly upon their stems, as a damsel generally sits when she is not engaged; but there were so many to choose among that it became quite a difficult matter. The Butterfly did not relish encountering difficulties, so in his perplexity he flew to the Daisy. She is called in France *Marguerite*. He knew that she could 'spae,' and that she did so often; for lovers plucked leaf after leaf from her, and with each a question was asked

respecting the beloved:—'Is it true love?' 'From the heart?' 'Love that pines?' 'Cold love?' 'None at all?'—or some such questions. Everyone asks in his own language. The Butterfly came too to put his questions; he did not, however, pluck off the leaves, but kissed them all one by one, with the hope of getting a good answer.

'Sweet Marguerite Daisy,' said he, 'you are the wisest wife among all the flowers; you know how to predict events. Tell me, shall I get this one or that? or whom shall I get? When I know, I can fly straight to the fair one, and commence wooing her.'

But Marguerite would scarcely answer him; she was vexed at his calling her 'wife,' for she was still unmarried, and therefore was not a wife. He asked a second time, and he asked a third time, but he could not get a word out of her; so he would not take the trouble to ask any more, but flew away without further ado on his matrimonial errand.

It was in the early spring, and there were plenty of Snowdrops and Crocuses. 'They are very nice-looking,' said the Butterfly, 'charming little things, but somewhat

too juvenile.' He, like most very young men, preferred elder girls. Thereupon he flew to the Anemones, but they were rather too bashful for him; the Violets were too enthusiastic; the Tulips were too fond of show; the Jonquils were too plebeian; the Linden-tree blossoms were too small, and they had too large a family connection; the Apple blossoms were certainly as lovely as Roses to look at, but they stood to-day and fell off to-morrow, as the wind blew. It would not be worth while to enter into wedlock for so short a time, he thought. The Sweetpea was the one which pleased him most; she was pink and white, she was pure and delicate, and belonged to that class of notable girls who always look well, yet can make themselves useful in the kitchen. He was on the point of making an offer to her when at that moment he observed a peapod hanging close by, with a withered flower at the end of it. 'Who is that?' he asked. 'My sister,' replied the Sweetpea. 'Indeed! then you will probably come to look like her by-and-by,' screamed the Butterfly as he flew on.

The Honeysuckles hung over the hedge; they were extremely ladylike, but they had long faces and yellow

complexions. They were not to his taste. But who was to his taste? Ay! ask him that.

The spring had passed, the summer had passed, and autumn was passing too. The flowers were still clad in brilliant robes, but, alas! the fresh fragrance of youth was gone. Fragrance was a great attraction to him, though no longer young himself, and there was none to be found among the Dahlias and Hollyhocks. So the Butterfly stooped down to the Wild Thyme.

'She has scarcely any blossom, but she is altogether a flower herself, and all fragrance—every leaflet is full of it. I will take her.'

So he began to woo forthwith.

But the Wild Thyme stood stiff and still, and at length she said, 'Friendship, but nothing more! I am old, and you are old. We may very well live for each other, but marry—no! Let us not make fools of ourselves in our old age!'

So the Butterfly got no one. He had been too long on the look-out, and that one should not be. The Butterfly became an old bachelor, as it is called.

It was late in the autumn, and there was nothing but

drizzling rain and pouring rain; the wind blew coldly on the old willow-trees till the leaves shivered and the branches cracked. It was not pleasant to fly about in summer clothing; this is the time, it is said, when domestic love is most needed. But the Butterfly flew about no more. He had accidentally gone within doors, where there was fire in the stove—yes, real summer heat. He could live, but 'to live is not enough,' said he; 'sunshine, freedom, and a little flower, one must have.'

And he flew against the window pane, was observed, admired, and stuck upon a needle in a case of curiosities. More they could not do for him.

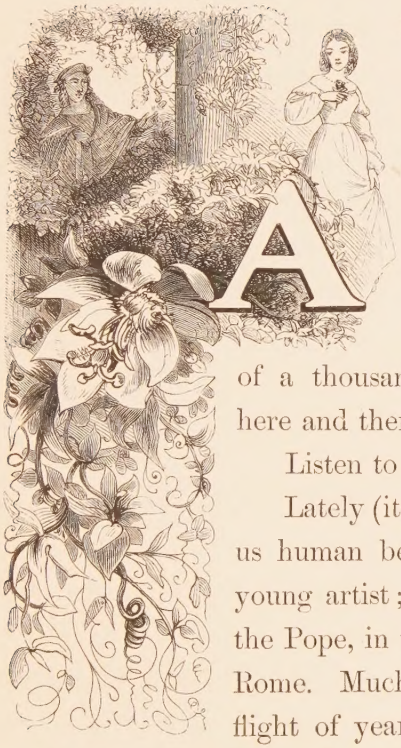
'Now I am sitting on a stem, like the flowers,' said the Butterfly; 'very pleasant it is not, however. It is almost like being married—one is tied so fast.' And he tried to comfort himself with this reflection.

'That is poor comfort!' exclaimed the plants in the flower-pots in the room.

'But one can hardly believe a plant in a flower-pot,' thought the Butterfly; 'they are too much among human beings.'

PSYCHE.

PSYCHE.



AT the dawn of day through the red atmosphere shines a large star, morning's clearest star; its ray quivers upon the white wall, as if it would there inscribe what it had to relate—what in the course of a thousand years it has witnessed here and there on our revolving earth.

Listen to one of its histories:—

Lately (its *lately* is a century ago to us human beings) my rays watched a young artist; it was in the territory of the Pope, in the capital of the world—Rome. Much has changed there in the flight of years, but nothing so rapidly as the change which takes place in the human form

between childhood and old age. The imperial city was then, as now, in ruins; fig-trees and laurels grew among the fallen marble pillars, and over the shattered bath-chambers, with their gold-enamelled walls; the Colosseum was a ruin; the bells of the churches rang, incense perfumed the air, processions moved with lights and splendid canopies through the streets. The Holy Church ruled all, and art was patronised by it. At Rome lived the world's greatest painter, Raphael; there also lived the first sculptor of his age, Michael Angelo. The Pope himself paid homage to these two artists, and honoured them by his visits. Art was appreciated, admired, and recompensed. But even then not all that was great and worthy of praise was known and brought forward.

In a narrow little street stood an old house; it had formerly been a temple, and there dwelt a young artist. He was poor and unknown; however, he had a few young friends, artists like himself, young in mind, in hopes, in thoughts. They told him that he was rich in talent, but that he was a fool, since he never would believe in his own powers. He always destroyed what he had formed

in clay; he was never satisfied with anything he did, and never had anything finished so as to have it seen and known, and it was necessary to have this in order to make money.

'You are a dreamer,' they said, 'and therein lies your misfortune. But this arises from your never having lived yet, not having tasted life, enjoyed it in large exhilarating draughts, as it ought to be enjoyed. It is only in youth that one can do this. Look at the great master, Raphael, whom the Pope honours and the world admires: *he* does not abstain from wine and good fare.'

'He dines with the baker's wife, the charming Fornarina,' said Angelo, one of the liveliest of the young group.

They all talked a great deal, after the fashion of gay young men. They insisted on carrying the youthful artist off with them to scenes of amusement and riot—scenes of folly they might have been called—and for a moment he felt inclined to accompany them. His blood was warm, his fancy powerful; he could join in their jovial chat, and laugh as loud as any of them; yet what they called 'Raphael's pleasant life' vanished from his mind like a morning mist: he thought only of the inspiration

that was apparent in the great master's works. If he stood in the Vatican near the beautiful forms the masters of a thousand years before had created out of marble blocks, then his breast heaved; he felt within himself something so elevated, so holy, so grand and good, that he longed to chisel such statues from the marble blocks. He wished to give a form to the glorious conceptions of his mind; but how, and what form? The soft clay that was moulded into beautiful figures by his fingers one day, was the next day, as usual, broken up.

Once, as he was passing one of the rich palaces, of which there are so many at Rome, he stepped within the large open entrance court, and saw arched corridors adorned with statues, enclosing a little garden full of the most beautiful roses. Great white flowers, with green juicy leaves, shot up the marble basin, where the clear waters splashed, and near it glided a figure, that of a young girl, the daughter of the princely house—so delicate, so light, so lovely! He had never beheld so beautiful a woman. Yes—painted by Raphael, painted as Psyche, in one of the palaces of Rome! Yes—there she stood as if living!

She also lived in his thoughts and heart. And he hurried home to his humble apartment, and formed a Psyche in clay; it was the rich, the high-born young Roman lady, and for the first time he looked with satisfaction on his work. It was life itself—it was herself. And his friends, when they saw it, were loud in their congratulations. This work was a proof of his excellence in art: that they had themselves already known, and the world should now know it also.

Clay may look fleshy and lifelike, but it has not the whiteness of marble, and does not last so long. His Psyche must be sculptured in marble, and the expensive block of marble required he already possessed: it had lain for many years, a legacy from his parents, in the court-yard. Broken bottles, decayed vegetables, and all manner of refuse, had been heaped on it and soiled it, but within it was white as the mountain snow. Psyche was to be chiselled from it.

One day it happened (the clear star tells nothing of this, for it did not see what passed, but we know it), a distinguished Roman party came to the narrow humble street. The carriage stopped near it. The party had

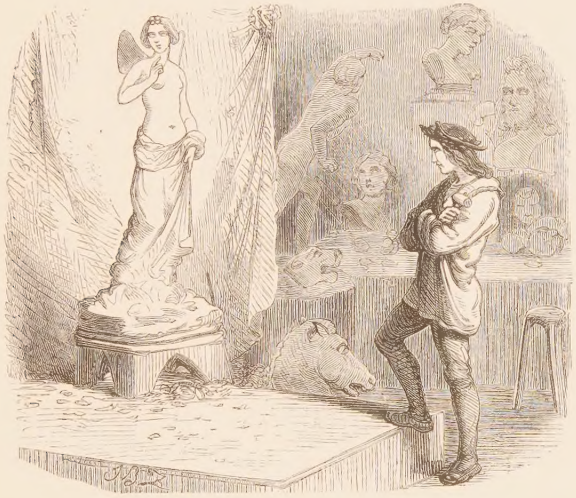
come to see the young artist's work, of which they had heard by accident. And who were these aristocratic visitors? Unfortunate young man! All too happy young man, he might also well have been called. The young girl herself stood there in his studio; and with what a smile when her father exclaimed, 'But it is you, you yourself to the life!' That smile could not be copied, that glance could not be imitated—that speaking glance which she cast on the young artist! It was a glance that fascinated, enchanted, and destroyed.

'The Psyche must be finished in marble,' said the rich nobleman. And that was a life-giving word to the inanimate clay and to the heavy marble block, as it was a life-giving word to the young man.

'When the work is finished, I will purchase it,' said the noble visitor.

It seemed as if a new era had dawned on the humble studio; joy and sprightliness enlivened it now, and ennui fled before constant employment. The bright morning star saw how quickly the work advanced. The clay itself became as if animated with a soul, for even in it stood forth, in perfect beauty, each now well-known feature.

'Now I know what life is,' exclaimed the young artist joyfully; 'it is love. There is glory in the excellent, rapture in the beautiful. What my friends call life and enjoyment are corrupt and perishable—they are bubbles



The Sculptor's Triumph.

in the fermenting dregs, not the pure heavenly altar-wine that consecrates life.

The block of marble was raised, the chisel hewed large pieces from it; it was measured, pointed, and marked.

The work proceeded; little by little, the stone assumed a form, a form of beauty—Psyche—charming as God's creation in the young female. The heavy marble became life-like, dancing, airy, and a graceful Psyche, with the bright smile so heavenly and innocent, such as had mirrored itself in the young sculptor's heart.

The star of the rose-tinted morn saw it, and well understood what was stirring in the young man's heart—understood the changing colour on his cheek, the fire in his eye—as he carved the likeness of what God had created.

'You are a master, such as those in the time of the Greeks,' said his delighted friends. 'The whole world will soon admire your Psyche.'

'My Psyche!' he exclaimed. 'Mine! Yes, such she must be. I too am an artist like these great ones of bygone days. God has bestowed on me the gift of genius, which raises its possessor to a level with the high-born.'

And he sank on his knees, and wept his thanks to God, and then forgot Him for *her*—for her image in marble. The figure of Psyche stood there, as if formed of snow, blushing rosy red on the morning sun.

In reality he was to see her, living, moving, her whose voice had sounded like the sweetest music. He was to go to the splendid palace, to announce that the marble Psyche was finished. He went thither, passed through the open court to where the water poured, splashing from dolphins, into the marble basin, around which the white flowers clustered, and the roses shed their fragrance. He entered the large lofty hall, whose walls and roof were adorned with armorial bearings and heraldic designs. Well-dressed, pompous-looking servants strutted up and down, like sleigh-horses with their jingling bells; others of them, insolent-looking fellows, were stretched at their ease on handsomely carved wooden benches; they seemed the masters of the house. He told his errand, and was then conducted up the white marble stairs, which were covered with soft carpets. Statues were ranged on both sides; he passed through handsome rooms with pictures and bright mosaic floors. For a moment he felt oppressed by all this magnificence and splendour—it nearly took away his breath. But he speedily recovered himself; for the princely owner of the mansion received him kindly, almost cordially, and, after

they had finished their conversation, requested him, when bidding him adieu, to go to the apartments of the young Signora, who wished also to see him. Servants marshalled him through superb saloons and suites of rooms to the chamber where she sat, elegantly dressed and radiant in beauty.

She spoke to him. No *Miserere*, no tones of sacred music, could more have melted the heart and elevated the soul. He seized her hand, and carried it to his lips; never was rose so soft. But there issued a fire from that rose—a fire that penetrated through him and turned his head; words poured forth from his lips, which he scarcely knew himself, like the crater pouring forth glowing lava. He told her of his love. She stood amazed, offended, insulted, with a haughty and scornful look, an expression which had been called forth instantaneously by his passionate avowal of his sentiments towards her. Her cheeks glowed, her lips became quite pale; her eyes flashed fire, and were yet as dark as ebon night.

'Madman!' she exclaimed; 'begone! away!' And she turned angrily from him, while her beautiful coun-

tenance assumed the look of that petrified face of old with the serpents clustering around it like hair.

Like a sinking lifeless thing, he descended into the street; like a sleep-walker he reached his home. But

The Repulse.

there he awoke to pain and fury; he seized his hammer, lifted it high in the air, and was on the point of breaking the beautiful marble statue, but in his distracted state of mind he had not observed that Angelo was standing near

him. The latter caught his arm, exclaiming, 'Have you gone mad? What would you do?'

They struggled with each other. Angelo was the stronger of the two, and, drawing a deep breath, the young sculptor threw himself on a chair.

'What has happened?' asked Angelo. 'Be yourself, and speak.'

But what could he tell? what could he say? And when Angelo found that he could get nothing out of him, he gave up questioning him.

'Your blood thickens in this constant dreaming. Be a man like the rest of us, and do not live only in the ideal: you will go deranged at this rate. Take wine until you feel it get a little into your head; that will make you sleep well. Let a pretty girl be your doctor; a girl from the Campagna is as charming as a princess in her marble palace. Both are the daughters of Eve, and not to be distinguished from each other in Paradise. Follow your Angelo! Let me be your angel, the angel of life for you! The time will come when you will be old, and your limbs will be useless to you. Why, on a fine sunny day, when everything is laughing and joyous,

do you look like a withered straw that can grow no more? I do not believe what the priests say, that there is a life beyond the grave. It is a pretty fancy, a tale for children—pleasant enough if one could put faith in it. I, however, do not live in fancies only, but in the world of realities. Come with me! Be a man!'

And he drew him out with him; it was easy to do so at that moment. There was a heat in the young artist's blood, a change in his feelings; he longed to throw off all his old habits, all that he was accustomed to—to throw off his own former self—and he consented to accompany Angelo.

On the outskirts of Rome was a hostelry much frequented by artists. It was built amidst the ruins of an old bath-chamber; the large yellow lemons hung among their dark bright leaves, and adorned the greatest part of the old reddish-gilt walls. The hostelry was a deep vault, almost like a hole in the ruin. A lamp burned within it, before a picture of the Madonna; a large fire was blazing in the stove (roasting, boiling, and frying were going on there); on the outside, under lemon and laurel trees, stood two tables spread for refreshments.

Kindly and joyously were the two artists welcomed by their friends. None of them ate much, but they all drank a great deal; that caused hilarity. There was singing, and playing the guitar; Saltarello sounded, and the merry dance began. A couple of young Roman girls, models for the artists, joined in the dance, and took part in their mirth—two charming Bacchantes! They had not, indeed, the delicacy of Psyche—they were not graceful lovely roses—but they were fresh, hardy, ruddy carnations.

How warm it was that day! Warm even after the sun had gone down—heat in the blood, heat in the air, heat in every look! The atmosphere seemed to be composed of gold and roses—life itself was gold and roses.

'Now at last you are with us! Let yourself be borne on the stream around you and within you.'

'I never before felt so well and so joyous,' cried the young sculptor. 'You are right, you are all right; I was a fool, a visionary. Men should seek for realities, and not wrap themselves up in phantasies.'

Amidst songs and the tinkling of guitars, the young

men sallied forth from the hostelry, and took their way, in the clear starlit evening, through the small streets; the two ruddy carnations, daughters of the Campagna, accompanied them. In Angelo's room, amidst sketches and folios scattered about, and glowing voluptuous paintings, their voices sounded more subdued, but not less

The Revellers.

full of passion. On the floor lay many a drawing of the Campagna's daughters in various attractive attitudes: they were full of beauty, yet the originals were still more beautiful. The six-branched chandeliers were burning, and the light glared on the scene of sensual joy.

'Apollo! Jupiter! Into your heaven and happiness

am I wafted. It seems as if the flower of life has in this moment sprung up in my heart.'

Yes, it sprang up, but it broke and fell, and a deadening hideous sensation seized upon him. It dimmed his sight, stupefied his mind; perception failed, and all became dark around him.

He gained his home, sat down on his bed, and tried to collect his thoughts. 'Fie!' was the exclamation uttered by his own mouth from the bottom of his heart. 'Wretch! begone! away!' And he breathed a sigh full of the deepest grief.

'Begone! away!' These words of hers—the living Psyche's words—were re-echoed in his breast, re-echoed from his lips. He laid his head on his pillow; his thoughts became confused, and he slept.

At the dawn of day he arose, and sat down to reflect. What had happened? Had he dreamt it all—dreamt *her* words—dreamt his visit to the hostelry, and the evening with the flaunting carnations of the Campagna? No, all was reality—a reality such as he had never before experienced.

Through the purplish haze of the early morning

shone the clear star; its rays fell upon him and upon the marble Psyche. He trembled as he gazed on the imperishable image; he felt that there was impurity in his look, and he threw a covering over it. Once only he removed the veil to touch the statue, but he could not bear to see his own work.

Quiet, gloomy, absorbed in his own thoughts, he sat the live-long day. He noticed nothing, knew nothing of what was going on about him, and no one knew what was going on within his heart.

Days, weeks passed; the nights were the longest. The glittering star saw him one morning, pale, shaking with fever, arise from his couch, go to the marble figure, lift the veil from it, gaze for a moment with an expression of deep devotion and sorrow on his work, and then, almost sinking under its weight, he dragged the statue out into the garden. In it there was a dried-up, dilapidated disused well, which could only be called a deep hole; he sank his Psyche in it, threw in earth over it, and covered the new-made grave with brushwood and nettles.

'Begone! away!' was the short funeral service.

The star witnessed this through the rose-tinted atmosphere, and its ray quivered on two large tears upon the corpse-like cheeks of the young fever-stricken man —death-stricken they called him on his sick-bed.

The monk Ignatius came to see him as a friend and physician—came with religion's comforting words, and spoke to him of the Church's happiness and peace, of the sins of mankind, the grace and mercy of God.

And his words fell like warm sunbeams on the damp spongy ground; it steamed, and the misty vapours ascended from it, so that the thoughts and mental images which had received their shapes from realities were cleared, and he was enabled to take a more just view of man's life. The delusions of guilt abounded in it, and such there had been for him. Art was a sorceress that lured us to vanity and earthly lusts. We are false towards ourselves, false towards our friends, false towards our God. The serpent always repeats within us, '*Eat thereof; then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods!*'

He seemed now for the first time to understand himself, and to have found the way to truth and rest.

On the Church shone light from on high; in the monk's cell dwelt that peace amidst which the human tree might grow to flourish in eternity.

Brother Ignatius encouraged these sentiments, and

The Refuge of the Church.

the artist's resolution was taken. A child of the world became a servant of the Church: the young sculptor bade adieu to all his former pursuits, and went into a monastery.

How kindly, how gladly, was he received by the Brothers! What a Sunday fête was his initiation! The Almighty, it seemed to him, was in the sunshine that illumined the church. His glory beamed from the holy images and from the white cross. And when he now, at the hour of the setting sun, stood in his little cell, and, opening the window, looked out over the ancient Rome, the ruined temples, the magnificent but dead Colosseum—when he saw all this in the spring-time, when the acacias were in bloom, the evergreens were fresh, roses bursting from their buds, citrons and orange-trees shining, palms waving—he felt himself tranquillised and cheered as he had never been before. The quiet open Campagna extended towards the misty snow-decked hills, which seemed painted in the air. All, blended together, breathed of peace, of beauty, so soothingly, so dreamily—a dream the whole.

Yes, the world was a dream here. A dream may continue for an hour, and come again at another hour; but life in a cloister is a life of years, long and many.

He might have attested the truth of this saying, that from within comes much which taints mankind. What

was that fire which sometimes blazed throughout him? What was that source from which evil, against his will, was always welling forth? He scourged his body, but from within came the evil yet again. What was that spirit within him, which, with the pliancy of a serpent, coiled itself up, and crept into his conscience under the cloak of universal love, and comforted him? The saints pray for us, the holy mother prays for us, Jesus Himself has shed His blood for us. Was it weakness of mind or the volatile feelings of youth that caused him sometimes to think himself received into grace, and made him fancy himself exalted by that—exalted over so many? For had he not cast from him the vanities of the world? Was he not a son of the Church?

One day, after the lapse of many years, he met Angelo, who recognised him.

'Man!' exclaimed Angelo. 'Yes, surely it is yourself. Are you happy now? You have sinned against God, for you have thrown away His gracious gift, and abandoned your mission into this world. Read the parable of the confided talent. The Master who related it spoke the truth. What have you won or found? Have you not

allotted to yourself a life of dreams? Is your religion not a mere coinage of the brain? What if all be but a dream—pretty yet fantastic thoughts?'

'Away from me, Satan!' cried the monk, as he fled from Angelo.

'There is a devil, a personified devil! I saw him to-day,' groaned the monk. 'I only held out a finger to him, and he seized my whole hand! Ah, no!' he sighed. 'In myself there is sin, and in that man there is sin; but he is not crushed by it—he goes with brow erect, and lives in happiness. I seek my happiness in the consolations of religion. If only they were consolations—if all here, as in the world I left, were but pleasing thoughts! They are delusions, like the crimson skies of evening, like the beautiful sea-blue tint on the distant hills. Close by these look very different. Eternity, thou art like the wide, interminable, calm-looking ocean: it beckons, calls us, fills us with forebodings, and if we venture on it, we sink, we disappear, die, cease to exist! Delusions! Begone! away!'

And tearless, lost in his own thoughts, he sat upon his hard pallet; then he knelt. Before whom? The stone

cross that stood on the wall? No, habit alone made him kneel there.

And the deeper he looked into himself, the darker became his thoughts. 'Nothing within, nothing without—a lifetime wasted!' And that cold snowball of thought rolled on, grew larger, crushed him, destroyed him.

'To none dare I speak of the gnawing worm within me; my secret is my prisoner. If I could get rid of it, I would be Thine, O God!'

And a spirit of piety awoke and struggled within him.

'Lord! Lord!' he exclaimed in his despair. 'Be merciful, grant me faith! I despised and abandoned Thy gracious gift—my mission into this world. I was wanting in strength; Thou hadst not bestowed that on me. Immortal fame—Psyche—still lingers in my heart. Begone! away! They shall be buried like yonder Psyche, the brightest gem of my life. *That* shall never ascend from its dark grave.'

The star in the rose-tinted morn shone brightly—the star that assuredly shall be extinguished and annihilated, while the spirits of mankind live amidst celestial light.

Its trembling rays fell upon the white wall, but it inscribed no memorial there of the blessed trust in God, of the grace, of the holy love, that dwell in the believer's heart.

'Psyche within me can never die—it will live in consciousness! Can what is inconceivable be? Yes, yes! For I myself am inconceivable. Thou art inconceivable, O Lord! The whole of Thy universe is inconceivable—a work of power, of excellence, of love!

His eyes beamed with the brightest radiance for a moment, and then became dim and corpse-like. The church bells rang their funeral peal over him—the dead; and he was buried in earth brought from Jerusalem, and mingled with the ashes of departed saints.

Some years afterwards the skeleton was taken up, as had been the skeletons of the dead monks before him; it was attired in the brown cowl, with a rosary in its hand, and it was placed in a niche among the human bones which were found in the burying-ground of the monastery. And the sun shone outside, and incense perfumed the air within, and masses were said.

Years again went by.

The bones of the skeletons had fallen from each other, and become mixed together. The skulls were gathered and set up—they formed quite an outer wall to the church. There stood also *his* skull in the burning sunshine: there were so many, many death's heads, that no one knew now the names they had borne, nor his. And see! in the sunshine there moved something living within the two eye-sockets. What could that be? A motley-coloured lizard had sprung into the interior of the skull, and was passing out and in through the large empty sockets of the eye. There was life now within that head, where once grand ideas, bright dreams, love of art, and excellence had dwelt—from whence hot tears had rolled, and where had lived the hope of immortality. The lizard sprang forth and vanished; the skull mouldered away, and became dust in dust.

It was a century from that time. The clear star shone unchanged, as brightly and beautifully as a thousand years before; the dawn of day was red, fresh, and blushing as a rosebud.

Where once had been a narrow street, with the ruins of an ancient temple, stood now a convent. A grave

was to be dug in the garden, for a young nun had died, and at an early hour in the morning she was to be buried. In digging the grave, the spade knocked against a stone. Dazzling white it appeared—the pure marble became visible. A round shoulder first presented itself; the spade was used more cautiously, and a female head was soon discovered, and then the wings of a butterfly. From the grave in which the young nun was to be laid, they raised, in the red morning light, a beautiful statue—Psyche carved in the finest marble. 'How charming it is! how perfect!—an exquisite work, from the most glorious period of art!' it was said. Who could have been the sculptor? No one knew that—none knew him except the clear star that had shone for a thousand years; *it* knew his earthly career, his trials, his weakness. But he was dead, returned to the dust. Yet the result of his greatest effort, the most admirable, which proved his vast genius—Psyche—that never can die; that might outlive fame. That was seen, appreciated, admired, and loved.

The clear star in the rosy-streaked morn sent its glittering ray upon Psyche, and upon the delighted

countenances of the admiring beholders, who saw a soul created in the marble block.

All that is earthly returns to earth, and is forgotten; only the star in the infinite vault of heaven bears it in

Psyche.

remembrance. What is heavenly obtains renown from its own excellence; and when even renown shall fade, Psyche shall still live.

THE SNAIL AND THE ROSEBUSH.

THE SNAIL AND THE ROSEBUSH.

ROUND a garden was a fence of hazel bushes, and beyond that were fields and meadows, with cows and sheep; but in the centre of the garden stood a Rosebush in full bloom. Under it lay a Snail, who had a great deal in him, according to himself. 'Wait till my time comes,' said he; 'I shall do a great deal more than to yield roses, or to bear nuts, or to give milk as the cows do.'

'I expect an immense deal from you,' said the Rosebush. 'May I venture to ask when it is to come forth?'

'I shall take my time,' replied the Snail. 'You are

always in such a hurry with your work, that curiosity about it is never excited.'

The following year the Snail lay, almost in the same spot as formerly, in the sunshine under the Rosebush ; it was already in bud, and the buds had begun to expand into full-blown flowers, always fresh, always new. And the Snail crept half out, stretched forth its feelers, and then drew them in again.

'Everything looks just the same as last year; there is no progress to be seen anywhere. The Rosebush is covered with roses—it will never get beyond that.'

The summer passed, the autumn passed; the Rosebush had yielded roses and buds up to the time that the snow fell. The weather became wet and tempestuous, the Rosebush bowed down towards the ground, the Snail crept into the earth.

A new year commenced, the Rosebush revived, and the Snail came forth again.

'You are now only an old stick of a Rosebush,' said he; 'you must expect to wither away soon. You have given the world all that was in you. Whether that were worth much or not, is a question I have not time to take

into consideration; but this is certain, that you have not done the least for your own improvement, else something very different might have been produced by you. Can you deny this? You will soon become only a bare stick. Do you understand what I say?'

'You alarm me,' cried the Rosebush. 'I never thought of this.'

'No, you have never troubled yourself with thinking much. But have you not occasionally reflected why you blossomed, and in what way you blossomed—how in one way and not in another?'

'No,' answered the Rosebush; 'I blossomed in gladness, for I could not do otherwise. The sun was so warm, the air so refreshing; I drank of the clear dew and the heavy rain; I breathed—I lived! There came up from the ground a strength in me, there came a strength from above. I experienced a degree of pleasure, always new, always great, and I was obliged to blossom. It was my life; I could not do otherwise.'

'You have had a very easy life,' remarked the Snail.

'To be sure, much has been granted to me,' said the Rosebush, 'but no more will be bestowed on me now.

You have one of those meditative, deeply thinking minds, one so endowed that you will astonish the world.'

'I have by no means any such design,' said the Snail. 'The world is nothing to me. What have I to do with the world? I have enough to do with myself, and enough in myself.'

'But should we not in this earth all give our best assistance to others—contribute what we can? Yes! I have only been able to give roses; but you—you who have got so much—what have you given to the world? What will you give it?'

'What have I given? What will I give? I spit upon it! It is good for nothing! I have no interest in it. Produce your roses—you cannot do more than that—let the hazel bushes bear nuts, let the cows give milk! You have each of you your public; I have mine within myself. I am going into myself, and shall remain there. The world is nothing to me.'

And so the Snail withdrew into his house, and closed it up.

'What a sad pity it is!' exclaimed the Rosebush. '*I* cannot creep into shelter, however much I might wish

it. I must always spring out, spring out into roses. The leaves fall off, and they fly away on the wind. But I saw one of the roses laid in a psalm-book belonging to the mistress of the house; another of my roses was placed on the breast of a young and beautiful girl, and another was kissed by a child's soft lips in an ecstasy of joy. I was so charmed at all this: it was a real happiness to me—one of the pleasant remembrances of my life.'

And the Rosebush bloomed on in innocence, while the Snail retired into his slimy house—the world was nothing to him!

Years flew on.

The Snail had returned to earth, the Rosebush had returned to earth, also the dried rose-leaf in the psalm-book had disappeared, but new rosebushes bloomed in the garden, and new snails were there; they crept into their houses, spitting—the world was nothing to them!

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